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ABSTRACT

Most models for public administration have been developed in the context of medium-sized or large states and are not necessarily appropriate for small states (states with less than 1.5 million people). This book focuses on small states and identifies common features in small-state economies, societies, and politics. Several differences exist in the framework of public administration for small states. The most common differences are in areas of personal relationships, government pervasiveness, and links between politicians and bureaucrats. The priorities and formal organization of Ministries of Education may vary, and an evaluation of these variations helps individuals to understand how to effectively organize priorities for specific states. Management aspects, including decision-making styles, dissemination of information, ways to allow for staff absences, the building of teams, and management of interministry link are all important in effective management of small states. Among the first problems encountered in small states is job definition in situations where staff are expected to hold multifunctional roles. Appraisal systems, training plans, and training strategies are outlined in order to combat restricted career paths. Most small states are members of at least some regional bodies as well as of broader international organizations. The implications of work with these organizations are shown from the viewpoint of the small Ministry of Education. (61 references) (LAP)

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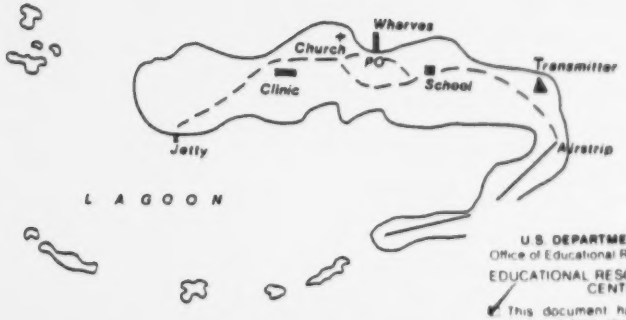
Making Small Practical

The Organisation and Management of Ministries of Education in Small States



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Making Small Practical:

The Organisation and Management of Ministries of Education in Small States

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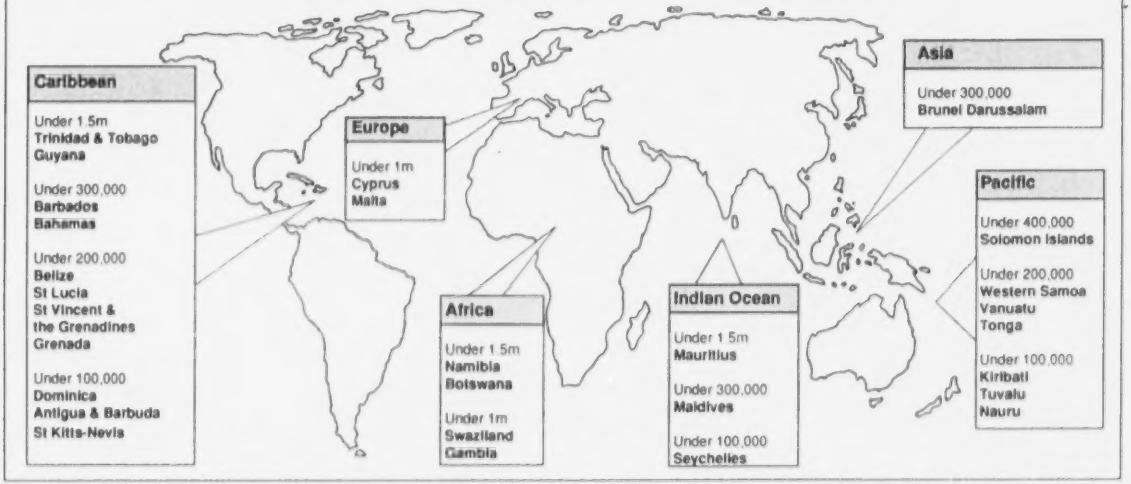
The small states:

Of the Commonwealth's 50 sovereign member states, 28 have populations under 1.5 million



Foreword

In the last few years the Commonwealth Secretariat's Education Programme has organised a set of activities focusing on the educational development of small states. This programme has been developed at the express wish of Commonwealth Ministers of Education who met in Cyprus in 1984, in Kenya in 1987, and, most recently, in Barbados in 1990. The mandate partly reflects the composition of the Commonwealth, for 28 of its 50 members have populations below 1.5 million. National smallness of scale, and the problems and benefits which derive from this, are at the heart of a range of Commonwealth programmes.

In 1985 the Government of Mauritius was generous host to a group of educators, administrators and academics from the Caribbean, Europe, the Indian Ocean, Southern Africa and the South Pacific. This group helped to conceptualise the impact of smallness of scale on national educational development, and to set the parameters for a programme of Commonwealth activities.

The Mauritius meeting identified many issues which relate closely to smallness. When planning for higher education and training, for example, difficult choices must be made about trade-off between the development of national institutions and the use of regional and overseas institutions. Similar predicaments are faced in the sphere of curriculum development and examinations: how far is it cost-effective and appropriate to prepare local syllabuses, and what attention should small states pay to foreign curricula and the international creditworthiness of overseas examinations? Many small states also have to find ways to provide education and training which are sufficiently flexible to fit fluctuating employment markets.

The Mauritius group recommended that the Commonwealth Secretariat should develop a programme of activities based on its findings. It was proposed that initiatives should facilitate a network of links, exchanges and collaborative activities, backed by an approved set of funded meetings and studies.

Since 1985, three issues identified in Mauritius have received detailed attention at pan-Commonwealth meetings. In 1987, in associa-

tion with the Institute of Education at the University of the South Pacific, consideration was given to the supply, training and professional support of education personnel in multi-island situations. A year later, working with the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College in St. Lucia, the focus was on post-secondary colleges in small states; and in 1989 a project on the organisation and management of ministries of education in small states was initiated in Malta in association with the University of Malta.

This book is a product of the Malta meeting and of a set of case studies which was commissioned subsequently. It is intended as a practical work which sets out the experiences of various countries in a readily accessible form.

The book is based on the observation that most models for public administration have been developed in the context of medium-sized or large states, and are not necessarily appropriate to small states. For example, in small ministries of education it is necessary to group tasks together, and to require administrators to be multi-functional. It is also necessary to devise different management strategies for societies in which social networks are complex and overlapping.

A companion book has been published simultaneously, and presents in a country-by-country format edited versions of 14 studies prepared for the project. It is entitled *Ministries of Education in Small States: Case Studies of Organisation and Management*, and is also available from the Commonwealth Secretariat. The companion book provides supplementary material for those who wish to explore in more depth the issues raised here.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has also prepared other publications to alleviate the paucity of training and professional materials which take specific account of the needs of education systems in small states. They are listed on the back cover.

Finally, the Commonwealth Secretariat would like to thank the author of this book and the advisory team which assisted in its preparation, the authors of the case studies, and the participants in the project workshops for the high quality of their contributions. We believe that the project has made a considerable conceptual and practical contribution to the field, about which we are both pleased and proud.

Peter R.C. Williams,
Director, Education Programme,
Human Resource Development Group,
The Commonwealth Secretariat.

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Introduction

This book is mainly intended for:

- senior and middle-level administrators in ministries and departments of education in small states, and
- trainers of educational administrators for small states.

The trainers may be actually in small states; or they may be in the institutions of larger states that serve smaller ones.

The book aims to stimulate thinking by presenting and discussing the administrative models and experiences of a range of countries. It can be read by individuals independently; it can be discussed at staff meetings and internal 'brainstorming' sessions; and it can be used as reference material in training workshops and courses.

1. Focus

Many of the bureaucratic models used in small states were originally designed for much larger states, and do not always operate very well in small systems. It is often desirable at least to modify basic models and perhaps even to create new ones. Ministries commonly undertake reviews of their structures and procedures, but the officers in charge of these reviews do not always have good comparative material on which to base their decisions. This book reduces that problem. Whereas most literature is based on medium-sized and large states, this book specifically focuses on small ones.

The book cannot present rules which are universally applicable. Each country faces different circumstances, and structures and procedures must be adapted to fit the goals, cultures and resources of individual societies. However, much can be learned from different systems. Sometimes the lessons are what to avoid rather than what to imitate, but both types of lesson are valuable.

The book has seven chapters:

- *Chapter 1* notes the range and diversity of small states, but also identifies common features in small-state economies, societies and politics. This sets the context for subsequent chapters.
- *Chapter 2* focuses on the framework of public administration in small states, noting ways in which structures and practices differ in small states from those in larger states. It highlights personal relationships, government pervasiveness and links between politicians and bureaucrats in small states.
- *Chapter 3* turns to the formal organisation of Ministries of Education. It presents a variety of examples, commenting on their advantages and disadvantages. For example, while some ministries have specialist units for planning, curriculum development and research, others require officers to be multi-functional. In the latter case it is instructive to note which functions are grouped together and how. The chapter also notes priorities, and identifies tasks which in some ministries are not undertaken at all.
- *Chapter 4* turns to the management aspects. It begins with the management implications of situations in which everybody seems to know everybody else, not only in the office but also outside. The chapter also discusses decision-making styles, dissemination of information, ways to allow for staff absences, the building of teams, and management of inter-ministry links.
- *Chapter 5* expands on personnel matters. Among the first problems encountered in small states is job definition in situations where staff are expected to be multi-functional and flexible. The chapter also looks at sources of personnel in small states, and at career paths in what is often a very restricted hierarchy. From this, the chapter turns to appraisal systems, training plans and training strategies.
- *Chapter 6* focuses on international linkages. To some extent such linkages pervade discussion in all parts of the book, but they are sufficiently important to deserve a specific chapter. Most small states are members of at least some regional bodies as well as of broader international organisations. The chapter examines the implications of work with these organisations from the viewpoint of the small Ministry of Education. It also highlights the administrative implications of the foreign aid programmes found in many small states.
- *Chapter 7* completes the book with a summary of experiences and models and a final overview. Models cannot always be

transferred from one context to another, but small states can still learn a lot from each other.

2. Concepts and Definitions

A book on small states should always indicate at the beginning what it means by 'small', for the term is of course relative. Most analysts use population as the main criterion, though common alternative or supplementary indicators are area and size of economy.

Following a pattern common among analysts, for this book population has been made the main criterion. Small states are defined as ones with populations below 1.5 million. However this cut-off point is entirely arbitrary, and it is often more appropriate to examine issues along a continuum of size. It is also important to observe differences between states which have similar population sizes but very different areas and economies.

A second question in a book on small states is what is meant by a 'state'. In this book, the concept is not restricted by sovereignty. Many non-sovereign territories have strong autonomy, and much of the material in this book is as applicable to them as to sovereign states. For example, Montserrat and Anguilla are two Caribbean territories which have opted to remain colonies of the United Kingdom. They both have a high degree of self-government, and the issues facing their Ministries of Education are comparable to those in such neighbouring independent territories as Dominica and Antigua & Barbuda.

The final point concerns the definition of 'ministry'. In some countries the Ministry of Education is a very small unit, chiefly comprising the minister and a personal assistant. The main bureaucratic body is then called a department of education. Other countries do not make this terminological distinction, instead using the term ministry to cover the whole structure from the minister downwards. In this book the word department is used when referring to organisations in specific countries which employ that term. In general, however, the book uses the word ministry to cover both the office of the minister and the operational bureaucracy.

3. Preparation of the Book

The origins of this book were mentioned in the Foreword. Preparation occurred in three distinct phases. The first was the February 1989 meeting in Malta mentioned in the Foreword. Participants included

officers from:

- the Ministries of Education in Bahamas, Cook Islands, The Gambia, Maldives, Malta, St. Lucia, Seychelles and Tonga;
- the Universities of Malta, the South Pacific and the West Indies;
- the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration (CCEA);
- the Division of Educational Policies & Planning at Unesco headquarters;
- Unesco's Caribbean Network of Educational Innovation for Development (CARNEID); and
- the Commonwealth Secretariat (both its Education and Management Development Programmes).

Following the Malta meeting, the Commonwealth Secretariat commissioned detailed case studies. Most authors were officers actually working in the ministries about which they wrote. In some cases these individuals were paired with outsiders, who helped to strengthen objectivity and stimulate ideas. The case studies covered the Ministries of Education in Barbados, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Dominica, The Gambia, Guyana, Jersey, Kiribati, Maldives, Malta, Montserrat, St. Lucia, Seychelles, Solomon Islands and Tonga.

The third phase, leading to direct preparation of the book, commenced after completion of the case studies. Mark Bray was commissioned to do the basic drafting, but his work was guided by Hubert Charles, Charles Farrugia, Steve Packer and Jakes Swartland. Once the first draft of the manuscript had been prepared, in 1990 the team met in Jersey to provide detailed criticism and to help in improvement. The final product was prepared by Mark Bray in the light of inputs from the other team members.

It cannot be pretended that this process was either easy or inexpensive, but it was very worthwhile. This book is the product of wide ranging inputs, including:

- the papers and discussions of the Malta meeting,
- the materials in the case studies, and
- the existing literature on public administration and other features of small countries.

This represents a wide base of material. The Malta meeting and the subsequent case studies brought material from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific. The members of the editorial team also had diverse professional experience.

It will further be noted that the countries covered embrace a range of types. Some are rich while others are poor; some are island states while others are coastal or inland states; some have populations below 20,000, while others have populations over a million. To some extent the diversity of these features is problematic since it makes comparison more difficult. However, it is hoped that readers will also see the strongly beneficial side of the diversity, for it has generated valuable contrasts. And underlying all the diversity is a significant base of commonality from which all small states can learn.

Chapter 1:

The Characteristics of Small States

In some respects, small states are not very different from medium-sized and large states. They exist in an interdependent world, and in many cases operate within a legacy from a colonial past. Their governments aspire to higher standards of living, but must struggle with limited material and human resources. Their education systems are structured according to familiar patterns with pre-primary education at the base and higher education at the apex. The basic organisation of schools and classrooms is also similar in small, medium-sized and large states.

However small states do have some distinctive features. Despite enormous variation in economics, culture and geography, certain features are common to all small states. Not all these features are relevant to the organisation and management of Ministries of Education, but it is useful to commence this book by identifying some of them.

With this in mind, this chapter begins by noting the range and diversity of small states. It then turns to some common features in the economies, societies and politics of small states. Both the diversity and the commonalities set a framework for analysis of Ministries of Education.

1. The Range and Diversity of Small States

Table 1 lists 71 states and territories which have populations below 1.5 million. Four points immediately stand out:

- *Location*. The states are scattered in all parts of the world -- Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe and the South Pacific.
- *Culture*. This geographic spread brings with it corresponding cultural diversity. Swaziland, for example, is very different from Greenland; and the Turks & Caicos Islands are very different from the Cook Islands.

Table 1: The Small States of the World

Country/Region	Population 1988	GNP/hd 1988 US$
Africa		
Seychelles*	68,000	3,800
Sao Tome & Principe	119,000	280
Cape Verde	352,000	490
Djibouti	381,000	1,210
Equatorial Guinea	397,000	350
Comoros	442,000	440
Swaziland*	737,000	790
The Gambia*	822,000	220
Guinea Bissau	940,000	170
Mauritius*	1,048,000	1,810
Gabon	1,077,000	2,760
Botswana*	1,164,000	1,040
Namibia*	1,262,000	2,440
Asia		
Maldives*	203,000	410
Brunei Darussalam*	243,000	14,120
Qatar	350,000	11,610
Macau	443,000	2,990
Bahrain	481,000	9,470
Bhutan	1,373,000	150
Oman	1,402,000	5,070
United Arab Emirates	1,500,000	15,720
Caribbean		
Anguilla+	7,000	850
Turks & Caicos Islands+	10,000	780
Montserrat+	12,000	3,330
British Virgin Islands+	13,000	8,500
Cayman Islands+	20,000	3,480
St. Kitts & Nevis*	43,000	2,530
Bermuda+	56,000	22,540
Aruba	60,000	6,750
Dominica*	81,000	1,650
Antigua & Barbuda*	84,000	2,800
Grenada*	102,000	1,450
US Virgin Islands	108,000	9,760
St. Vincent & Grenadines*	122,000	1,100
St. Lucia*	145,000	1,540
Belize*	182,000	1,490
Netherlands Antilles	191,000	6,380
Bahamas*	247,000	10,560
Barbados*	255,000	5,990
Suriname	429,000	2,450
Guyana*	799,000	390
Trinidad & Tobago*	1,241,000	3,350

Country/Region	Population 1988	GNP/hd 1988 US$
Europe		
San Marino	23,000	..
Liechtenstein	27,000	..
Monaco	27,000	..
Gibraltar+	29,000	4,240
Faeroe Islands	47,000	11,930
Andorra	48,000	..
Greenland	54,000	8,780
Isle of Man+	64,000	5,910
Guernsey+	55,000	..
Jersey+	80,000	..
Iceland	249,000	20,160
Malta*	345,000	5,050
Luxembourg	371,002	2,600
Cyprus*	686,000	6,260
South Pacific		
Tokelau+	2,000	830
Niue+	3,000	..
Tuvalu*	8,000	650
Nauru*	8,000	10,230
Belau	12,000	..
Wallis & Futuna	15,000	968
Northern Marianas	17,000	..
Cook Islands+	20,000	1,500
American Samoa	36,000	..
Marshall Islands	41,000	..
Kiribati*	67,000	650
Fed. States of Micro.	86,000	1,500
Tonga*	101,000	800
Guam	126,000	..
Vanuatu*	151,000	820
New Caledonia	154,000	5,760
Western Samoa*	168,000	580
French Polynesia	170,000	7,840
Solomon Islands*	304,000	430
Fiji	732,000	1,520

* Sovereign member states of the Commonwealth
\+ Associated States and Dependent Territories in the Commonwealth

- *Population*. The states have substantial differences in population size. The range is from 2,000 in Tokelau to 1,500,000 in United Arab Emirates.
- *Incomes*. Luxembourg, Bermuda and Iceland, with annual per capita incomes above US$20,000, have populations among the richest in the world. By contrast in Bhutan, Guinea Bissau, The Gambia and Guyana annual per capita incomes are below US$400.

Additional aspects of diversity which are not shown in the table but which are worth noting include:

- *Area*. While some states are small, others are very large. The land area of Macau, for example, is just 17 square kilometres, while that of Botswana exceeds 600,000 square kilometres.
- *Geography*. Some states (e.g. Montserrat, Dominica) are composed of single islands; some (e.g. Tonga, Kiribati) are composed of many islands; some (e.g. Belize, Brunei Darussalam) are coastal enclaves; and some (e.g. Swaziland, Bhutan) are entirely inland.
- *Proximity to Other States*. Some states (e.g. Seychelles) are isolated, far from their nearest neighbours. Others (e.g. in the Caribbean) exist in clusters.

Small States versus Large States

When comparing small and large states, three categories of features may be identified:

- *ones which arise equally in both small and large states;*
- *ones which arise in both small and large states, but which assume greater prominence in small states; and*
- *ones which are distinctive to small states.*

This book is mainly concerned with the second and third categories. It generally ignores the features which exist equally in small and large states because discussion on these matters is readily available in the standard literature.

These features may have strong implications for the organisation and management of Ministries of Education. For example, cultural traditions affect the nature of interpersonal relations; population size determines the size of the pool from which ministries can recruit staff; national income affects the extent to which the country can afford large bureaucratic structures and employ expatriates; the area and geographic spread determine the extent to which district offices are needed for remote areas; and the proximity to other states influences the extent to which regional cooperation is possible. These points will be discussed in subsequent sections of this book.

2. The Economies of Small States

A substantial literature now exists on the economies of small states. The most obvious way in which it is relevant to the organisation and management of Ministries of Education is that a strong economy permits a larger bureaucracy with higher salaries and better support services. Beyond this, it is perhaps unnecessary to go into detail here on the strategies used by governments of small states to maximise economic growth.

However, it is worth noting several points. The first is that many small states, perhaps even more than medium-sized and large states, are heavily dependent on foreign trade. This influences the structure of the labour market, and thus also the education system. It may require people to learn foreign languages, perhaps to the detriment of local ones. It may also require extensive specialised training in commercial and other trade-oriented subjects.

Secondly, in many small states human resources are the most valuable asset. This is especially true of states which are geographically small, and emphasises the importance of education. In some small states human resources have even become an 'export' and earner of foreign exchange. Tonga, Cape Verde and Montserrat are three small states in completely different parts of the world which gain substantial income from the remittances of their nationals in other countries. Governments which anticipate and encourage emigration have to ensure that the education qualifications of their people are marketable in the destination countries.

Thirdly, many small states are heavily reliant on foreign aid. Indeed small states commonly receive much higher per capita allocations of foreign aid than do large states. This is partly a function of the strategic location of many small states, but also reflects their general visibility in international affairs. It may also reflect recognition that

small states have special needs, including in the operation of government bureaucracies.

Dependence on foreign aid may have major implications for the organisation and management of Ministries of Education. First, personnel are likely to spend considerable time preparing projects and liaising with bilateral and multilateral aid agencies. Some ministries have special units for negotiating with donors. Because of small-state manpower constraints, in some countries the donors themselves sponsor recruitment of expatriate staff to help design and implement aid projects. These matters are discussed at greater length in Chapter 6.

3. The Societies of Small States

One common characteristic of small states is a strong sense of national and cultural identity. This gives ministries' curriculum development units an important role. The people of small states wish history, social science and other teaching to refer specifically to their own situations, and may resent dependence on syllabuses and books prepared for foreign countries. Thus ministries may require not only curriculum development but also textbook-production units. Inevitably, the mix of small print-runs and near total importation of production inputs place significant pressure on already low education budgets.

Emphasis on national development may also have significant implications for recruitment policies. In order to reduce local unemployment, ministries are often under strong pressure to restrict employment opportunities to local citizens. Especially in states with just a few thousand people, this pressure limits the pool of expertise from which ministries can readily draw personnel.

Important features may also be noted in the interpersonal relationships of small states. In contrast to medium-sized and large states, everybody seems to know everybody else, and does so in a wide range of different contexts. For those running Ministries of Education, this may have several implications.

- It may be much more difficult to apply neutral bureaucratic rules. For example, it may be difficult to remove an inefficient employee on grounds of inefficiency alone, because he is quite likely to be a relative or family friend of the person who would have to fire him.
- It is not unusual for people who cannot get formal appointments to arrange to be invited to social functions or family reunions in which they meet casually the person to whom they want to

speak. In extreme cases, supplicants may call at the officer's home, which is easily identifiable. In this way, senior officers can be 'met' or accosted through unofficial as well as official channels. They themselves use both established and unorthodox approaches with their superiors.

- Because people in small states know that they have to live with each other on a long term basis, they develop strategies for 'managed intimacy'. As explained in the box below, individuals find ways to avoid conflict and mute hostility.
- Yet it is also obvious that the societies of small states are not always harmonious and pleasant. Indeed many small states are torn by bitter hostility and strife. This may be another feature of small societies, in which it is often more difficult to accommodate divergent views.

Small States and 'Managed Intimacy'

Small states have highly personalised societies in which people know each other in a multitude of settings, and in which relationships are longlasting. In such situations, people must develop what has been called 'managed intimacy'. In the words of Lowenthal (1987):

> *Small-state inhabitants learn to get along, like it or not, with folk they will know in myriad contexts over their whole lives. To enable the social mechanism to function without undue stress, they minimise or mitigate overt conflict. They become expert at muting hostility, deferring their own views, containing disagreement, and avoiding dispute in the interests of stability and compromise.*

In large societies, Lowenthal points out, it is easy to take issue with antagonists you need seldom or ever come across again. But to differ with someone in a small society where the two of you share a long mutual history and expect to go on being involved in countless ways is another matter. This feature of small societies may have major implications for the operation of a Ministry of Education.

4. The Politics of Small States

The social features outlined above may have a direct relationship with the political features of small states. In turn, the nature of political features may have major implications for the operation of Ministries of Education.

On the positive side, the very smallness of small states gives their inhabitants an influence on their leaders that would be denied to most people in larger states. Leaders known personally even to the poorest are less likely to try to exclude any group from consideration. Moreover the leaders themselves may retain and promote a strong sense of community and equity.

However, the political forces of small states are not always so favourable. Although in theory a small territory with an informed electorate should be able to operate a representative democracy very well, in small states with powerful élites it may be difficult for an opposition to develop. Partly as a result, single-party states and dictatorships are far from unknown in small states. Intense class divisions and highly visible extremes of influence and wealth make consensus and democracy in many small states more pious principles than practical realities.

Other features arising from the highly personal atmosphere may be summarised as follows. In small states:

- the role of the individual takes on greater significance;
- interpersonal relationships can be deeper and much more harmonious, which greatly assists the work of managers;
- top political leaders are more likely to communicate directly with one another, which improves intersectoral coordination;
- but on the other hand, individuals are more susceptible to group pressures; and
- criticism of political leaders and senior administrators may be muted, often informal, but where it does appear is likely to be personal in form and strident in tone.

5. Summary

Although small states display considerable diversity, it is also possible to identify common features. This chapter began by noting the range and diversity of small states, highlighting geography, culture, population, incomes, area, topography and proximity to other states. It then turned to the commonalities. Separate sections looked in turn at the economies,

The Politics of Small States: Contrasting Pictures

Small states may operate at extremes of the political spectrum. This has been noted by Diggines (1984), who set out two contrasting pictures. On the positive side, he suggested:

> *the very closeness and intimacy of a small society produces a feeling of identity of the individual with his whole community which is more difficult to achieve in larger nations. Or again, with small populations there may be less danger of communal, ethnic or tribal divisions and rivalries.... In politics, a small population can often more easily judge and choose its political and other leaders from personal knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses than in a large society, where judgements of this kind have necessarily to be based mainly on television and other media which distort or conceal the true personalities of the individuals being judged. It seems it is easier in small societies for a general neighbourliness and mutual dependence to develop than would be possible, or at least likely, on a larger scale.*

But Diggines noted that it does not always work like this. He continued:

> *The tendency to parochialism and ignorance in political affairs ... easily plays into the hands of a would-be petty dictator, particularly as the absence of broader political issues tends to inhibit the formation of coherent, stable political parties with programmes based on principle rather than personalities.... In small countries it is relatively easier for a determined, unscrupulous individual with rather more than his share of charisma and ruthlessness to dominate all or most aspects of the country's life.*

What implications does this have for a Ministry of Education?

societies and politics of small states. Many of the features commented upon have important implications for the organisation and management of Ministries of Education. For example reliance on foreign aid may have implications for staffing and structures, close interpersonal relations may require special management techniques, and bureaucrats and politicians in small states may have slightly different types of relationships from their counterparts in large states.

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Chapter 2:

Public Administration in Small States

The previous chapter commenced by noting that in some respects small states are not very different from medium-sized and large states. This observation applies as much to public administration as to other spheres. The standard works on public administration, some of which are listed at the end of this chapter, contain material that is applicable in almost all settings.

However, it is also possible to identify features and strategies of public administration that are associated with small size. These are the concern of this chapter. It begins with discussion on the personal relationships in small systems, before turning to the tendency for governments to be particularly dominant in small states. The third section discusses the influence of politics in the bureaucracy, and is followed by comments on the total number and functions of ministries in different countries. Fifthly, the chapter notes matters of centralisation and decentralisation.

1. Personal Relationships

It was noted in Chapter 1 that small states have highly personalised and transparent societies. This has an effect on the operation of the bureaucracy, and the management implications of the situation will be discussed in Chapter 4. Meanwhile it is worth noting that many implications are positive, though some may be problematic.

Beginning with the positive side:

- Close relationships may speed decision-making, and can generate trust and confidence.
- Decision-making is not as abstract as in large states. Administrators can easily see the human impact of their decisions, both within their bureaucracies and within the society as a whole.

This may make the administrators more sensitive.

- Senior administrators may be better aware of the capacities of their subordinates, and of the background factors which shape those characteristics.
- Individuals with innovative ideas can have a large impact on the whole system, introducing changes which improve its operation and effectiveness.
- Interpersonal relationships based on ties that extend far beyond the workplace may strengthen loyalties and team work. As noted in the Malta case study for the Commonwealth project:

> The personal and social dimensions of a small civil service in a small country play a most prominent role in the way individuals perform, some most conscientiously and efficiently.

Of course, there may also be another side to the coin. In small states:

- The need always to be conscious of who is related to whom, who is antagonistic to whom, etc., may distort and delay decision-making. As the Malta case study also noted, officials may:

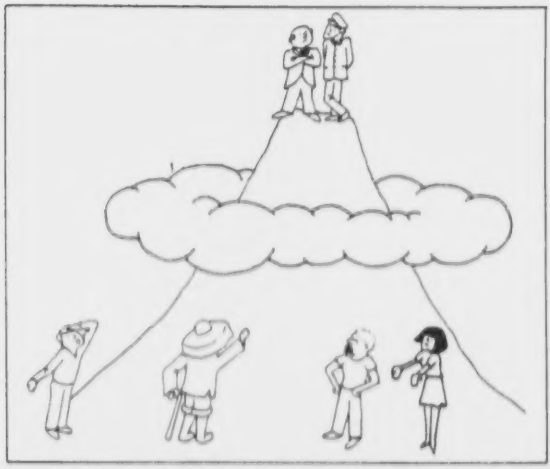
> envy the impersonality and formality that exist in larger systems where it is easier for officialdom to be faceless.

- Differences in personality may produce conflicts which are not easy to resolve in a small organisation and which may lead to inefficiency. The Jersey case study pointed out that:

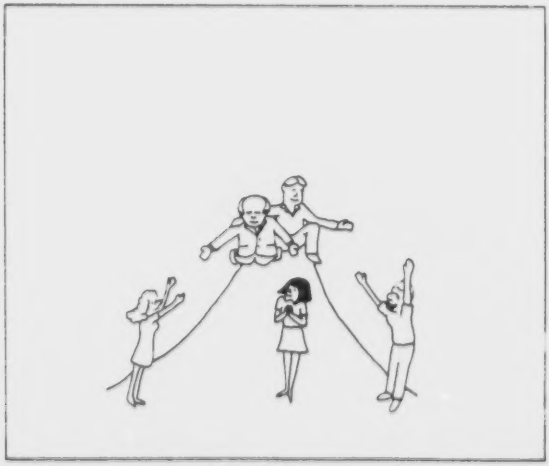
> Conflicts can consume energy and time which would otherwise be directed at the Ministry's objectives, and the loss is proportionately greater in a small Department.

- A competitive relationship between two individuals may have consequences for the whole organisation. The Montserrat case study referred to a case in which:

> Two individuals in particular have been in fierce competition for nearly a decade and their tussle has gradually reached higher echelons as each has been promoted. Their personal rivalries have thus had increasingly severe implications for the entire system.



In large states, senior administrators are often distant from the people, whom they cannot know personally. This sometimes causes dissatisfaction and a lack of harmony.



But in small states senior administrators can interact with the people much more easily and on a much more personal basis. This is a strong advantage for small states.

- Systems may be vulnerable to poorly-conceived innovations as well as well-conceived ones. The small system may lack the checks and balances of a large system, which make it volatile. This was mentioned in the Kiribati case study, for example.

These features may require special management strategies to maximise the advantages and minimise the disadvantages. Some such strategies are identified in subsequent chapters of this book.

2. Relative Size of Government

It has been noted by Bacchus and Brock (1987, p.3) that:

> In small states the size of the public service expressed as a percentage of the total population, tends to be disproportionately large. Further, the small number of clients for whom such services have to be provided makes it difficult for the administration of small states to enjoy economies of scale.

Certain functions, such as preparation of development plans, creation of mechanisms for paying teachers' salaries, and representation at international meetings, have to be conducted whether the state is large or small. Some economies in staffing may be achieved by asking individuals to undertake multiple jobs, but there are limits on the extent to which this is possible. In Montserrat, for example, it has proved impossible to reduce the ratio of education administrators to school pupils below 1:520. Large countries have much higher ratios.

Of course the magnitude of the bureaucracy depends on many factors other than the size of population. These include:

- the philosophy of the government,
- what the country can afford,
- whether or not the economy is centrally planned,
- whether extra government officials are needed to serve remote areas, and, in the short term,
- whether or not the government is operating a major development project.

International comparisons of civil service sizes encounter many problems of definition and data availability, but it is worth noting that Heller & Tait's (1984) study of 61 states found a wide range not only between

The Lack of Economies of Scale

The lack of economies of scale in the administrative system of small states is dramatically illustrated by the Curriculum Development Unit in Tonga. Because the authorities wish to cover all major subjects at all levels of the education system, the unit has an establishment of 29 posts:

- *7 Senior Education Officers,*
- *14 Assistant Senior Education Officers,*
- *7 Education Officers, and*
- *1 Clerk/typist.*

Tonga has a population of 101,000. At this ratio, the curriculum development units of:

- *Papua New Guinea (population 3.5 million) would have 1,000 staff,*
- *France (population 55.6 million) would have 17,000 staff,*
- *Japan (population 122.1 million) would have 37,000 staff, and*
- *India (population 781.4 million) would have 234,000 staff!*

However, it must also be recognised that the CDU staff in Tonga also spend time on other roles. In this respect they are multi-functional, and their official designations are potentially misleading.

countries of different sizes but also among countries of similar size. The country with greatest government dominance was Sweden (population 8,400,000), which had 14.66 government employees per 100 people. At the other end of the scale was Burundi (population 4,900,000), which had only 0.51 government employees per 100 people. Among small countries the range was from 10.21 in Barbados (population 252,000) to 1.94 in Belize (population 159,000).

3. Politics and the Bureaucracy

A second feature of small-state realities concerns the traditional western view that bureaucracies should be politically neutral. According to this view administrators should be separated from politicians, and the role of the administrators is merely to implement the policies determined by the politicians. Its classic form may be illustrated by a quotation from a British report (in Caiden 1982, p.77):

> There are spheres of activity legitimately open to the ordinary citizen in which the Civil Servant can play no part, or only a limited part. He is not to indulge in political or party controversy, lest by so doing he should appear no longer the disinterested adviser of Ministers able impartially to execute their policy. He is bound to maintain a proper reticence in discussing public affairs and more particularly those with which his own Department is concerned. And lastly, his position clearly imposes upon him restrictions in matters of commerce and business from which the ordinary citizen is free.

Yet in practice, senior public administrators are always influential political actors. Politicians rely on the administrators for advice, and the nature of that advice can significantly shape the nature of the policies proclaimed by the politicians. Also, the conventional doctrine seems to deny to public servants some of the basic political rights which are commonly advocated for all citizens of society. This aspect of conventional theory may therefore be challenged in all states, both large and small.

Nevertheless, it remains true that the model is still widely advocated in states of all sizes. Caiden (1982) gives examples in which the model has been advocated in the USA (population 243,800,000); and at the other end of the scale Murray (1985) gives examples from Niue (population 3,000). Reference was also made to the concept in the workshops which contributed to this book.

Yet while the model may be questionable in all contexts, it is especially questionable in small states. Expanding on the Niue example, Murray (1985, p.199) quotes the government's constitutional adviser as having said:

> It is of the greatest possible importance that the public service should remain independent, that it should be under the control of someone other than those engaged in active politics.... [If] the public servants do not have a proper respect for their government

> they cannot do their job well, and if they are not protected against political influence they will not be good independent advisers.

Murray observed that this doctrine had an air of unreality. With the exception of the members of the House of Assembly and the pastors, almost every adult in employment in Niue works for the government.

In similar vein, the author of the Jersey case study for the Commonwealth project observed what he called an "inevitable overlapping of political and bureaucractic activity". He continued:

> This is one of the reasons why the processes of larger scale organisations cannot easily be applied in a small one. In my experience, small state politicians know -- and want to know -- a great deal about the activities of the bureaucracy, and involve themselves in the bureaucracy's decision making. Larger systems in which I have worked have been able to build 'protective' procedures which create some distance between politicians and civil servants. The nature of the society, the range of tasks to be undertaken, the narrower and to some extent sharper political focus in the small system all prevent such procedures arising.

Several other case studies also noted overlap of political and bureaucratic activity. It was indicated for example, that:

- the Minister of Education in Brunei Darussalam is also Vice-Chancellor of the university, and
- the Director of Educational Services in Maldives is also a member of parliament.

The Roles of Politicians and Administrators

Even in medium-sized and large states it is often impossible completely to separate the roles of politicians and administrators. It is particularly difficult in small states, because individuals have to undertake multiple functions. In the small states with which you are familiar, can you identify overlapping roles similar to those cited in Niue, Jersey, Brunei Darussalam and Maldives?

The Maldives case study added that heads of the divisions and specialised agencies report directly to the Minister, who is not only the political head of the Ministry but also the professional and intellectual leader. This is made possible by the absence of marked distinctions between political, civil service and professional functions.

4. Ministry Numbers and Functions

Empirical survey does show some correlation between the size of states and the numbers of ministries. However, the total number of ministries in individual states shows wide variation. Table 2 lists information from 23 small states, and shows a range from 20 in Guyana to five in Tuvalu.

Decisions on the total number of Ministries may reflect budgetary and other constraints. It is for this reason that smaller states commonly have fewer ministries. However, the number may also reflect political factors, such as a need for governments to have many ministries in order to be able to appoint many ministers. Such situations are particularly likely to arise where governments are anxious to keep a number of politicians 'on side' in coalitions.

Table 2: The Number of Ministries in Selected Commonwealth States

State	Number	State	Number
Antigua	10	Maldives	9
Bahamas	12	Malta	10
Barbados	13	Mauritius	18
Belize	10	St. Lucia	11
Botswana	10	St. Vincent	7
Brunei Darussalam	12	Seychelles	9
Dominica	6	Solomon Islands	15
Fiji	16	Swaziland	11
The Gambia	13	Tonga	9
Guyana	20	Tuvalu	5
Jersey	16	Vanuatu	14
Kiribati	10		

Source: Sutton (1987), pp.11-12; Commonwealth Secretariat survey (1989).

States with small numbers of ministries generally combine roles and make individual ministries multi-functional. Chapter 3 will provide specific information on the functions with which education has been combined in a sample of Commonwealth states. Some group education not only with such closely-related functions as culture and sports but also with such less closely-related functions as health and postal services. It is not suggested that multi-functional ministries are not also found in medium-sized and large states; but they do seem to be more common in small states.

It might be assumed that in multi-functional ministries, it is possible to achieve greater linkages and integration between the different functions. Analysis of specific ministries indicates that this is achieved to some extent. For example, the coverage in Montserrat of education, health and community services in a single ministry:

- permits the Permanent Secretary to switch funds between votes when different priorities arise;
- assists the operation of the Red Cross school for the handicapped, in which two staff are on the Education establishment but the rest are employed by Health; and
- allows donations of sports equipment coming through the Community Services wing to be easily used in the schools.

However these do not seem particularly dramatic examples, and it appears that many multi-functional ministries in small states fail to make use of the special opportunities open to them. Thus although in a larger country the Ministry of Education might be an entity on its own, its Permanent Secretary might still have as much flexibility in switching funds between votes as is the case in Montserrat. Likewise, Ministries of Education in larger countries seem able to liaise with their counterparts in Health over institutions like the Red Cross school just as easily as in Montserrat, and schools in larger countries would seem to be just as likely to get hold of sports equipment as in Montserrat. In practice, most officers below the Permanent Secretary in the Montserrat Ministry of Education, Health and Community Services appear to operate in their own wings with little more communication between them than there is between that ministry and the Ministry of Agriculture, for example.

Similar comments are applicable to many other small states with multi-functional ministries. The staff of these ministries do not always take advantage of the extra opportunities open to them. In many contexts this deserves specific analysis by senior administrators.

Multiple Ministerial Responsibilities

It is not uncommon for individual ministers to have responsibility for more than one ministry. An extreme example is found in Niue (population 3,000), where the constitution limits the total number of ministers (including the Premier) to four. In 1989 the distribution of responsibilities among these four individuals was:

1. *The Premier and Minister for Economic Affairs, Public Services and Police;*
2. *Minister of Finance, Agriculture and Fisheries;*
3. *Minister of Education, Community Affairs and Health;*
4. *Minister of Works, Administrative Services, Posts and Telecommunications.*

5. Centralisation and Decentralisation

Many small states are compact and have good systems of internal communications. In such countries as Brunei Darussalam, Barbados and Jersey there is little pressure for territorial decentralisation through regional offices. This simplifies the tasks of administration.

However, some small states cannot escape the same types of pressure for decentralisation also found in larger states. Solomon Islands, for example, is an archipelago composed of many islands scattered over a vast area. Despite the fact that Solomon Islands has only 304,000 people, geographic and political factors have required creation of seven provincial governments. Responsibility for education is therefore divided between the national government on the one hand, and the seven provincial governments plus the capital's Town Council on the other hand.

Solomon Islands is perhaps an extreme case. But survey of other small states shows many forms of decentralisation which must be taken into account in the design of administrative structures. For example:

- Compared to its West African neighbours, The Gambia has a very small land area. However the country is long and narrow, stretching 400 kilometres up the Gambia River. Much adminis-

tration of education in The Gambia is decentralised to four regional offices.

- St. Lucia is geographically much smaller than The Gambia, and has much better internal communications. St. Lucia comprises a single island, which is just 43 kilometres long and 22 kilometres wide, but the government has felt it necessary to create eight Regional Councils. The Ministry of Education & Culture has had to fit into a broad decentralisation plan, and to appoint District Education Officers to each region.
- The Republic of Malta has two main islands, Malta and Gozo. Although communications are good and distances are small, the inhabitants of Gozo have a strong identity. The Ministry of Education has to maintain a separate office in Gozo, and gives that office a significant degree of autonomy.
- Botswana has a population of only 1,164,000. However, the country occupies a vast land area in southern Africa. For effective administration it has been necessary to establish a strong network of district and sub-district governments. Officers at the local level play a key role in the administration of primary and secondary schools.

This list could easily be extended with other examples. The main point is that states with small populations do not necessarily escape the pressures for decentralisation and the need to operate sub-national governments. This may impose a burden on manpower and financial resources which is proportionately much heavier than that carried in larger states.

6. Summary

Many of the models for public administration in small states were inherited from, and originally designed for, much larger states. This is not necessarily a problem in all aspects, but it is clear that some adaptations need to be made. Some would argue, e.g. in the Caribbean, that basic structural reform is required in government. It is felt in many cases that structures do not adequately match major strategic objectives.

Secondly, the chapter noted the tendency for government as a whole to be much more dominant in small than in medium-sized and large states. Certain functions have to be carried out whether the state is large or small; and in the smallest of the small, very high percentages of the labour force work for the government either directly or indirectly. However, the chapter did also note considerable variation among both

small and larger countries.

The third section in this chapter built on this observation about multi-functional roles. It observed that in all states it is difficult completely to separate the roles of politicians and senior administrators, but stressed that it is especially difficult in small states. Again, this is not necessarily bad. Combination of roles makes use of scarce talents and other resources, and can lead to desirable forms of integration.

The fourth section also noted wide variation, this time in the total number of ministries in small states. Decisions on the total number of ministries may reflect budgetary and other resource constraints, but they also reflect political factors. Nevertheless it was pointed out that the smallest of the small do have fewer ministries, and that individual ministries are more likely to be multi-functional.

Finally, the chapter has pointed out that although many small states are compact and experience little pressure for territorial decentralisation through regional offices, others are subjected to the same types of pressure as larger states. In small states the burden of operating regional offices is proportionately much greater than in medium-sized and large states.

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Chapter 3:

Formal Organisation of Ministries of Education

The organisation charts of Ministries of Education in different countries vary widely. Organisation charts may also vary in specific countries at different points in time. This is partly because changes in national priorities and in leadership lead to changes in structures.

Yet despite the variations, some general principles can be identified. This is the concern of this chapter, which compares the structures of ministries of education in different countries. It begins by noting links between structures and objectives. It then turns to grouping of macro functions, the tasks undertaken and not undertaken, deployment of administrative and professional staff, and the need for periodic restructuring.

1. Structures and Objectives

The designers of ministry structures generally have two main objectives:

a) to cover all essential functions with an appropriate combination of specialists and generalists, and
b) to secure a suitable hierarchy which provides a framework for decision-making and authority, and which meets the career aspirations of the individuals working in the ministry.

On the first aspect, certain basic functions must be carried out in all Ministries of Education. For example ministries must cater for both primary and secondary schools. They also require staff for policy formulation and deployment of teachers. This common ground leads to considerable similarity in the principal elements of all Ministries of Education.

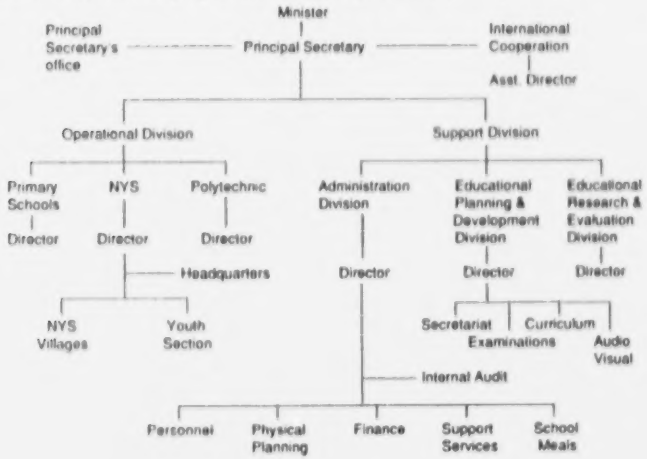
Beyond these basic functions, however, the range of specialist functions is likely to reflect government priorities. For example not all

governments stress kindergartens or adult education. Likewise, some governments are more anxious than others to have school broadcasts, nutrition programmes and textbook-production units. The Commonwealth project showed considerable variety in these aspects.

The project also showed that some ministries have special units for particular projects. For instance in Solomon Islands and The Gambia, high-level project implementation units have been created to take charge of World Bank and other externally-funded projects. Logically, such units should disappear once the projects have been implemented; but in some cases they remain. An example of the latter is the school building unit in Botswana, which was originally created for a secondary school expansion project assisted by World Bank funds. Before the project all government construction was directed from the Ministry of Works & Communication, and when the project was completed that ministry recommended that the unit be disbanded. However, the Ministry of Education resisted closure, so the unit has continued to exist.

It is also instructive to focus on the Ministry of Education in Seychelles. Shortly after Independence, the Seychelles government launched an innovative programme called the National Youth Service (NYS). The programme was seen as both a continuation of formal

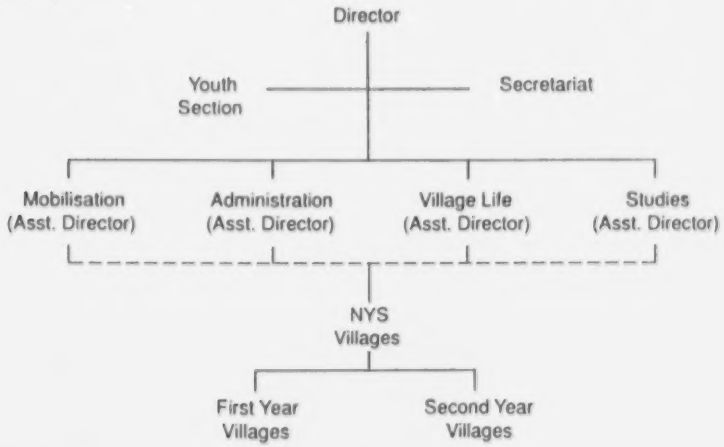
Figure 1: The Ministry of Education, Seychelles, (1990)



education and a scheme for pre-training in vocational and community fields. Students graduating from the NYS were expected to serve as models for the rest of society, concerned about and involved in what was happening around them. Since this was an urgent need for the envisaged New Society, the NYS was called a Service rather than a school.

In the NYS programme pupils reside on campuses called villages, each of which is a self-contained unit with a playground, agricultural plots, fishing facilities, a health centre, a medical doctor, nurses, and a study centre with laboratories, workshops and a library. These special provisions and facilities require their own administrative structures, and in this respect the organisation of the ministry differs from that in other countries (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 2: The NYS Division of the Ministry of Education, Seychelles (1990)



2. Grouping of Macro Functions

Chapter 2 noted a tendency for small states to group several functions in one ministry. It was not suggested that this does not also happen inlarge states; but it does seem more common in small states. Grouping of functions permits ministries to be larger than they would otherwise

Table 3: The Full Titles and Responsibilities of Ministries of Education in Commonwealth Small States (1990)

Country	Ministry Title
Anguilla	Finance, Education & Community Development
Antigua & Barbuda	Education, Culture, Youth Affairs & Sport
Bahamas	Education
Barbados	Education & Culture
Belize	Education, Sports & Culture
Bermuda	Education
Botswana	Education
British Virgin Islands	Health, Education & Welfare
Brunei Darussalam	Education
Cayman Islands	Health, Education & Social Services
Cook Islands	Education
Cyprus	Education
Dominica	Education & Sports
Falkland Islands	Education (CEO's Office)
The Gambia	Education, Youth, Sports & Culture
Gibraltar	Education, Sport & Postal Services
Grenada	Education & Social Services
Guyana	Education, Social Development & Culture
Jersey	Education
Kiribati	Education
Maldives	Education
Malta	Education & the Interior
Mauritius	Education, Arts & Culture
Montserrat	Education, Health & Community Services
Namibia	Education, Culture, Youth & Sport
Nauru	Health & Education
Niue	Education & Health
St. Kitts & Nevis	Education, Health & Community Affairs
St. Lucia	Education & Culture
St. Vincent & Grenadines	Education, Sports & Youth Affairs
Seychelles	Education
Solomon Islands	Education & Human Resources Development
Swaziland	Education
Tonga	Education, Youth, Sports & Culture
Trinidad & Tobago	Education
Turks & Caicos	Health, Education & Welfare
Tuvalu	Social Services
Vanuatu	Education, Youth & Sport
Western Samoa	Education, Youth, Sports & Culture

be. This in turn gives internal access to a wider range of skills, and it permits more efficient use of indivisible resources.

Table 3 provides specific information on the functions with which education is commonly combined in the ministries of small Commonwealth states. Among the 39 ministries listed, only 12 are exclusively concerned with education. The most common additional functions are

culture, sports, youth, and community affairs. These functions are closely related to education. However, some group education with less closely-related functions. Seven group it with health, and one groups it with postal services.

Moreover the functions of these ministries may be even wider than their names suggest. In Barbados, for example, the Ministry of Education & Culture is also responsible for ecclesiastical affairs; and in Malta the Ministry of Education & the Interior is also responsible for culture, environment, sport, youth and broadcasting.

One benefit from multi-functional organisation lies in the fact that at the top of the system they share a Minister and a Permanent Secretary, and at the bottom they may pool clerks, typists and transport facilities. However, many multi-functional ministries fail to make full use of the potential advantages of this form of organisation. Chapter 2 presented the example of Montserrat, in which the component parts of the Ministry of Education, Health & Community Services largely operate independently of each other. They engage in little sharing of resources, and linkages within the ministry are little stronger than those between ministries. Similar observations might be made in other countries. They arise in part because traditions have been inherited from larger ministries where close integration is less easy.

3. Tasks Undertaken and Not Undertaken

(a) Tasks Undertaken by Ministries of Education

Small ministries have to set priorities in the work that they undertake. They cannot do everything in as much depth as they would like, and they often have to decide not to undertake certain functions at all. It is therefore instructive to note what types of work are and are not undertaken in different countries.

Table 4 lists key functions which are commonly undertaken in Ministries of Education throughout the world. Against this list the table indicates whether these functions are given specialised units and/or posts in the ministries of 17 Commonwealth small states. The countries have been grouped in ascending order of population size, beginning with Montserrat (population 12,000) and ending with Botswana (population 1,164,000).

From the table, several points emerge:

a) There is considerable variation. As noted above, this partly reflects the priorities of the governments concerned. It may

Table 4: Specialised Units/Posts in Selected Commonwealth Ministries of Education

Country	Plan-ning	Inspect-ions	Guid-ance	Curric-ulum	Exams	T'chr Trng	Tech. Educ.	Adult Educ.	Pre-School	Research/ Evaluat'n	Broad-casts	Libraries	Int. Aid Unit	Special Educ.	Bldg.
Montserrat	yes	no	no	yes	no	no	yes	no	yes	no	no	no	no	no	yes
Cook Islands	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	no	no	yes	no	no	no	no	yes
Kiribati	no	no	no	yes	no	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes	yes	no	no	no
Seychelles	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no	yes	no	no	yes	no	yes
Dominica	no	no	no	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes	no	no	no
Jersey	no	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no	yes	no	no	yes	no	yes	no
Tonga	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
St. Lucia	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no	no	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no	yes
Western Samoa	no	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no
Maldives	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no	no	no	yes	no	yes
Brunei Dsm.	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes	no	no	no	no	no
Barbados	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no	yes
Solomon Islands	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no	no	yes	no	no	no
Malta	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	no	yes	no
The Gambia	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes	no	no	yes
Guyana	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes
Botswana	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes	no	no	no	yes

Notes: 1. The countries have been ranked in ascending order of population size.
2. Functions have been indicated only according to whether they are specifically named in the title of a job or unit. Some functions, of course, are still carried out even though they are not identified in the title.

Missed Opportunities for Integration and Efficiency

Small states are more likely than large states to have ministries covering multiple functions. In theory, this provides opportunities for integration of functions and for greater efficiency through sharing of resources. In practice, however, this does not seem to happen as much as it might. This is partly because small states have inherited their bureaucratic models from larger states where such integration and sharing is less easy. It represents a missed opportunity.

In the multi-functional ministries with which you are familiar, how much integration and sharing is there? What are the obstacles to greater integration and sharing, and how can senior administrators get round those obstacles?

also reflect historical traditions and availability of expertise.

b) Some functions are found in almost all ministries. Among the most obvious is curriculum development.

c) Other functions are found less commonly in the smallest states but more frequently in the larger ones. They include planning, inspection, guidance, and examinations.

d) On the other hand, the ministry in the smallest country (Montserrat) has some functions which are not found in the ministries of some larger countries. These include planning, technical education and pre-school education.

e) The ministry in the largest country (Botswana) still does not have all the functions listed. It would seem that this ministry is still not large enough to have all the specialisms that some administrators and educators might consider desirable.

However, the fact that a ministry does not have a special unit or job specifically labelled as responsible for a particular function does not necessarily mean that the function is not undertaken at all. For example in some ministries the word 'Planning' does not appear in the title of any unit or post, but planning is nevertheless undertaken by one or more staff. Similarly although inspections are not specifically mentioned they may be undertaken, e.g. by a curriculum development officer or by the Education Officer (Primary/Secondary). In this respect the table should be treated with caution.

Who does the Planning?

Some ministries are too small to have specialist planners. But this does not mean that planning is not undertaken. Instead it is done by other officers, either individually or collectively. In Dominica, for example, planning is undertaken by a team of senior personnel chaired by the Chief Education Officer. A similar system operates in Kiribati and Cook Islands.

This model has much to commend it. First it shows a way round the manpower constraints in a small system; and second it ensures that all senior officers are involved in planning.

The second point may be underlined by reference to Botswana. The Ministry there does have a planning unit, but has suffered tensions between the role of that unit and the necessity for all senior officers to plan ahead. Because they do not have planning units, this difficulty simply does not arise in Dominica, Kiribati and Cook Islands. Thus what appears from one angle to be a problem might seem from another angle to be a virtue!

(b) Tasks Delegated to Other Government Bodies

The previous section highlighted work undertaken and not undertaken by various Ministries of Education. But tasks not undertaken by Ministries of Education may still be undertaken by other Ministries. Examples generated by the Commonwealth project include:

- *Statistics*. In Botswana, school statistics are collected and processed by the Central Statistics Office; and in Solomon Islands they are processed by the Ministry of Finance.
- *Buildings*. In Seychelles, Brunei Darussalam and Dominica, most responsibility for government school buildings rests with the Ministry of Works.
- *Salaries*. In Dominica, The Gambia, Brunei Darussalam and St. Lucia, teachers' salaries are paid by the Treasury Department of the Ministry of Finance.

- *Printing*. In Dominica, all printing is done by a central government unit.
- *Examination Results*. In Guyana, examination results are processed by the National Data Management Authority.
- *Religious Education*. In Brunei Darussalam, the Ministry of Religious Affairs administers the Religious Teachers' Training College and the Religious Schools. It also advises on the religious curriculum in other schools.

When work is distributed in this way, the Ministries of Education gain access to the expertise of the other ministries. The arrangement also permits the government to establish central units which are large enough to employ specialist personnel and gain economies of scale.

However, it is important to note some potential drawbacks. For example a 1977 report in Botswana noted that although the range and quality of education statistics was very impressive, the data were underutilised by the Ministry of Education. One reason was that the statistics were collected by the Central Statistics Office. Since that time the situation has improved. But it is worth stressing the need to maintain good links to avoid problems of this sort.

Similarly, it is essential for Ministries of Education to ensure that the other agencies understand their detailed requirements. For example, because the staff of the Ministry of Works are unlikely ever to have been teachers, their architectural designs may not pay sufficient attention to educational needs. Again, therefore, careful liaison is essential.

(c) Tasks Undertaken by Non-Government and by External Bodies

The third category embraces tasks which are not undertaken by the government but which are instead undertaken either by non-government or by external bodies. In both economic and managerial terms it is often more sensible either to delegate tasks to voluntary agencies, or to contract work to the private sector. The government is then able to concentrate on doing well the key functions that it does undertake.

Among the examples generated by the Commonwealth case studies were:

- *Pre-School Education*. In Kiribati, pre-schooling is left to parents and to such private organisations as the Save the Children Federation and the Kiribati Pre-School Association.
- *Special Education*. In St. Lucia, special education is chiefly

provided by voluntary agencies such as the St. Lucia Blind Welfare Association and the Lions Club.

- *Inspection*. Jersey has a contract with the UK government for the services of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs). The Jersey authorities have a separate contract for advisory services with the East Sussex Local Education Authority.
- *Examinations*. The countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean have grouped together to form the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC); the countries of the South Pacific have formed the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA); and The Gambia is a member of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC). An alternative pattern is followed by Seychelles and Botswana, which use the examinations of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, the City & Guilds of London Institute, and the Royal Society of Arts. Jersey also uses British examinations.
- *Printing*. In contrast to the practice in Dominica where all printing is done by a central government unit, in Guyana, St. Lucia and Brunei Darussalam printing is contracted out to the private sector.
- *Distribution of Supplies*. The ministry in Montserrat used to procure and sell textbooks to students, but found this process cumbersome and wasteful of time. The business has now been assigned to a private firm. A similar arrangement operates in Guyana.
- *Food*. Brunei Darussalam contracts to the private sector for supply of food to school canteens; and Guyana contracts out the manufacture and distribution of biscuits for the supplementary school feeding programme.
- *Teacher Training*. Dominica Teachers' College restricts its focus to teachers for primary and junior secondary levels. No provision is made locally for senior secondary subjects or for technical/vocational education. Trainees in these subjects have to go to regional institutions in Antigua, Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, and St. Lucia, or to such countries as the UK, USA, Canada and France.
- *Publishing*. In Guyana, enrolments at the middle and upper secondary levels do not justify printing and publishing for the Guyanese system alone, and books are therefore imported. A similar situation exists in Dominica, The Gambia and many other small states.

Contracts for Specific Needs: A Curriculum Example

In 1975, the authorities in The Gambia established a Curriculum Development Centre. In what is now agreed to have been an unwise decision, they followed a large-state model with specialists in almost every subject and level. The result was a unit with no less than 35 posts.

The Centre's role and output was reviewed in 1988. It was observed that the body was much larger than the country could afford, and a different mode of operation was recommended. As the report pointed out:

> *Devising a curriculum to meet needs while remaining responsive to the economic and educational realities of society ... can benefit from specialist involvement. But in this activity such specialists could be used as managers rather than as writers of curriculum plans....*
>
> *It is hugely wasteful of trained manpower to maintain a body of specialists with a wide range of curriculum specialisms just in case any one specialism needs a new curriculum. Curriculum planning needs itself to be planned on a project basis. Curriculum specialists can manage projects and within them work with subject specialists from the teaching field in the development of a new curriculum plan.*

The report recommended a cut in the number of posts from 35 to seven. The smaller team, it suggested, should see themselves as managers working with teachers, external consultants and other specialists on a project-by-project basis. Such a system would be less wasteful of scarce manpower, more flexible, and perhaps able to deliver better products. The resulting unit would be much more appropriate to a small state.

(d) Tasks not Undertaken at All

Finally under this heading, in some countries various tasks are not undertaken at all. In most cases the authorities would like to undertake these tasks if they could; but they recognise the limitations on their resources, and set priorities.

Among the examples are that St. Lucia has no school broadcasts or teachers' resource centre. Research is also neglected, both in St. Lucia and in many other countries. Perhaps even more striking, neither Solomon Islands nor The Gambia has any secondary school inspectors; and Jersey has been unable to prepare regular reports or to undertake long-term planning.

These might seem to be serious limitations in the education systems of the countries concerned, and certainly it is necessary for the authorities to be aware of the situation. But it is also essential for small states to set priorities and to be realistic. Whilst secondary school inspectors are certainly important parts of any education system, it *is* possible for schools to operate without them. Also, it must be pointed out, many larger states have inspectorates that operate so inefficiently that some (especially remote) schools never actually see an inspector for years at a time, and are thus in a position which is little different. The same may be said about long-term planning, for it must be admitted that many larger states also lack effective long-term planning and yet somehow seem to muddle through.

Another category may be exemplified by special education. All populations have pupils with special education needs. However, in small states the number of pupils with specific types of need may be very limited. Even in states which have personnel trained to serve epileptic children, for example, the number of children requiring help may be too small to justify the employment of a full-time professional. In these cases it is sometimes preferable to arrange for children with special needs to go abroad.

It may be suggested, therefore, that the authorities of small states are right to set priorities, and to decide that some functions regrettably cannot be undertaken at all. Only in this way can the small states hope to do properly the functions that they do undertake. Some functions, such as school broadcasts and research, seem to be ready candidates for low priority (though this view might not be shared by ardent advocates of these activities).

On the other hand, neglect of such functions as long-term planning really cannot be recommended. Such neglect is likely to waste resources. This is a problem in all states, but is especially difficult to afford in small ones.

An Experiment to Cover Previously Unmet Needs

As in many other small states, the authorities in Maldives have found it difficult to cover all needs with a small cadre of Ministry personnel. Among the neglected functions has been inspection and advisory support for schools.

To meet this need, the authorities are investigating the potential of committees of teacher educators, curriculum developers and senior teachers. The system cannot afford to make such people full-time inspectors and advisers, but it is obvious that they have much to offer. The model shows one way in which small states can pool resources to cover needs that would otherwise remain unmet.

4. Administrative versus Professional Staff

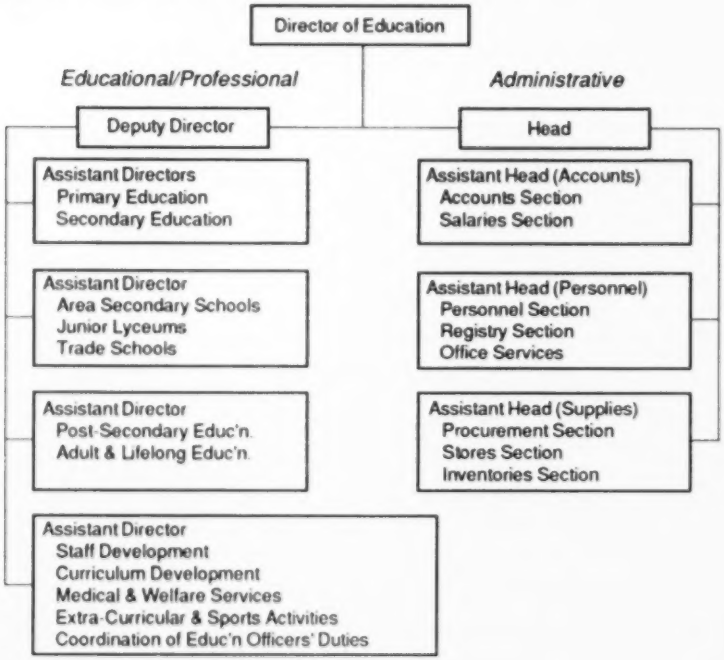
Many ministry organisation charts, in both small and large states, show a distinct separation between administrative and professional staff.

- The administrative officers are responsible for the functions that are required in ministries of all kinds, such as accounting, payment of salaries, transport and clerical services.
- The professional officers are responsible for the functions that are found only in Ministries of Education. Such functions include inspections, curriculum development, and technical education.

The two groups often have different career paths, and perhaps even different conditions of service. The administrative officers commonly move from one ministry to another, thereby gaining both breadth of experience and avenues for promotion. The professional staff are more commonly recruited from within the education system, and are often former teachers and school heads.

Among the small states covered by the Commonwealth project, this type of system was particularly clear in Malta (Figure 3). Comparable arrangements, though perhaps not quite so clear-cut, may be found in Barbados, Jersey, St. Lucia, Solomon Islands and Tonga. The chief virtue of the system is that the two groups of officers can receive different forms of training and supervision.

Figure 3: The Department of Education, Malta (1989)



However, this type of system can create major difficulties. Ones common to all ministries, large and small, include:

- *Classification*. It is sometimes difficult to classify occupations. For example, should officers responsible for school buildings work in the administrative wing on the grounds that buildings are needed by all ministries and are thus a general function? Or should the officers work in the professional wing on the grounds that the buildings required by the Ministry of Education are different from those required by other ministries, and that professional educators have better ideas how schools should be most appropriately designed? Similar questions may be raised about the educational planners, researchers, and various other specialists.
- *Tension*. The system can lead to considerable tension between

the two groups. Through their work in other ministries the administrators often have greater experience of the whole government system, which may lead them to consider the professionals too narrow in outlook. On the other hand the professionals may feel that they have great depth in the education system, and they may resent the 'interference' of the non-professionals.

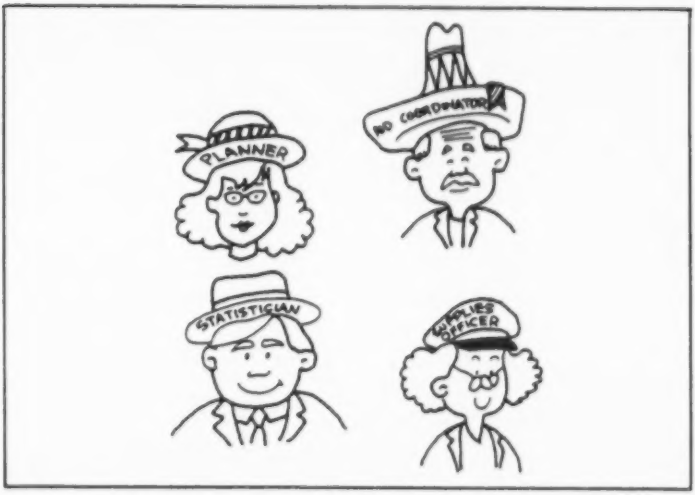
Two additional problems are especially serious in small states:

- *Deployment*. Division of personnel into separate groups creates an obstacle to deployment of individual officers in both types of work. For example, it would obstruct deployment of a single individual for both inspection of teachers (most commonly considered a professional function) and appraisal of ministry personnel (most commonly considered an administrative function). Almost by definition, small states are faced by scarcity in manpower resources. They can ill afford obstacles to use of talents in a broad range of jobs. Also, they need the flexibility to group tasks to make up reasonable workloads for individual officers.
- *Career Paths*. Small ministries often face problems of stagnation caused by the lack of promotion posts (discussed at greater length in Chapter 4). Division of personnel into two categories may make these problems worse. Professional officers are likely to be refused access to administrative vacancies, and thus have even more restricted career opportunities than would otherwise be the case. But the administrative officers can always move to other ministries. This gives the administrators an advantage not gained by the professionals, and further exacerbates tensions.

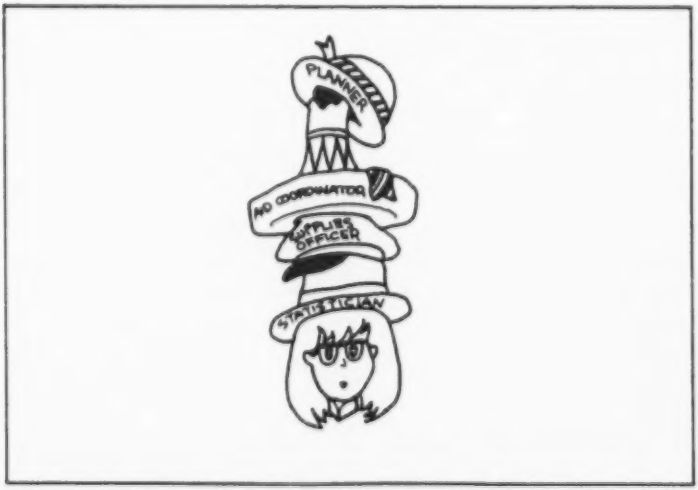
These points suggest that small states would be wise to avoid rigid compartmentalisation of functions. Separation of administrative and professional functions does have a rationale; but in small states the disadvantages are more likely to outweigh the advantages.

5. The Need for Periodic Restructuring

The Commonwealth project showed that many Ministries experience frequent structural change. It is not uncommon for ministry walls to display organisation charts which were drawn up recently but which are



In a large ministry, staff can specialise. Each person can wear a different 'hat'.



But in a small ministry, staff must be multi-functional. This has many implications for structures, recruitment and training

already out of date. Although this may reflect shortcomings in the whole process of determining structures, it is not necessarily bad. Again, small countries may need flexibility and fluidity even more urgently than large ones.

It is useful here to return to the point that small states can ill afford to waste the talents of specialist personnel. This applies to promotion posts as much as to original groupings of functions. For example, if a good planner or a mathematics specialist is promoted to Permanent Secretary, it is essential for scarce skills still to be harnessed. It may be necessary to redraw part of the organisation chart.

It must be recognised that this viewpoint runs contrary to traditional perspectives in public administration, and it could appear to lead to constant change in structures and lines of authority. Yet paradoxically it could also reduce change and instability, for individual officers can continue with at least part of the work they have been doing even after they have changed posts.

Enlarging on this, it is true that ministry organisation should begin with objectives rather than people. This principle warns against creation of posts merely because talented or influential individuals happen to be available, for such procedures lead to unbalanced organisations in which some functions are overstaffed and others are completely unstaffed. Nevertheless, the relative shortage of talent in small states requires some flexibility in structures and job definitions. It is more desirable to define positions around the skills and competence of available personnel than to define ideal jobs for people who do not exist.

6. Summary

This chapter began with the point that ministry structures ought to reflect objectives. Partly because the objectives and basic frameworks of school systems in all parts of the world are very similar, the structures and functions of Ministries of Education are also very similar. However, it is possible to find variations, e.g. according to the emphasis on kindergartens or adult education. The example of Seychelles and its National Youth Service has also been cited.

The second section focused on grouping of macro functions. It provided information on the functions with which education is grouped in Commonwealth small states. It might be assumed that in these multi-functional ministries it is possible to achieve greater linkages and integration between the different functions. Analysis of specific ministries indicates that this is achieved to some extent. However, many multi-functional ministries fail to make full use of the potential advan-

Structures and People

In many small ministries there is a tendency to fit structures to people as well as to fit people to structures. Although this also happens in large ministries, it seems to be more common and more visible in small ones.

This practice runs counter to the traditional norms of public administration. It can lead to constant revision, e.g. because senior posts have to be created for influential individuals due for promotion, or because individuals return from overseas with specific skills. It can also lead to distortions in the overall structure.

However, in small states it is easier to raise arguments in favour of the practice. The most cogent argument is that human resources are too valuable to be wasted by rigid structures. This is another example in which the philosophy of public administration developed in large states may not be completely appropriate to small ones.

tages of this form of organisation. This deserves close attention from senior administrators and policy-makers.

Section 3 turned to the functions undertaken and not undertaken by individual Ministries of Education. Small ministries have to set priorities in what they do. Some tasks may be delegated to other ministries, and other work may be left to non-government or to external bodies. Also, some tasks may be contracted to the private sector. These strategies may make considerable sense in both economic and managerial terms. However, the section observed that even with such strategies, in some states various tasks are still not undertaken at all. In some instances this may be serious, though it must be recalled that in practice they are not always undertaken in large states either.

The fourth part of the chapter focused on the common tendency to separate administrative from professional officers. This practice is based on a sound rationale, but it can also raise problems. In small states rigid compartmentalisation is particularly undesirable because it restricts opportunities for combining jobs to make reasonable workloads.

Finally, the chapter has noted the need for periodic restructuring. Although constant change leads to its own problems, it is especially

important in small states to make good use of available talent. Senior policy-makers and administrators must of course constantly bear in mind the objectives of the organisation, and it is dangerous to create posts merely because individuals happen to be available. However, it is also dangerous to set up rigid structures. Flexibility is perhaps needed more urgently in small than in medium-sized and large states. Well-conceived periodic changes in structures help organisations to meet their objectives and to make optimum use of available personnel.

Further Reading

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Chapter 4:

The Management of Small Ministries

It has already been noted that interpersonal relationships in small states are generally very different from those in large states. This feature affects the operation of ministries as much as other bodies, and may require special management procedures. In the highly personalised atmosphere of small ministries, when everything goes well it is possible to develop a strong team spirit. However, there is also a danger of serious tension and division. This issue is examined in the first two sections of this chapter.

The third section turns to dissemination of information. Although in small ministries people are often well informed by word of mouth, this cannot be taken for granted. Examples are presented of problems which have arisen because senior administrators have simply assumed that their staff have been well informed. Even in small ministries it is necessary to formalise mechanisms for dissemination of information.

Fourthly, the chapter turns to management of staff absence. In a small ministry the absence of one or two individuals, e.g. for annual leave or an overseas meeting, can raise much greater problems than it would in a large ministry. Development of teams, discussed in the fifth section, is among the ways to reduce these problems. Good team work can also promote efficiency, effectiveness and general morale.

Finally, the chapter discusses inter-ministry links. Of course these are essential in large as well as small states; but in the latter they may be a more prominent feature of daily life because the total system is small and because the contributions of individuals with scarce talents and expertise are often needed outside the Ministry of Education as well as within it.

1. Management in a Highly Personalised Environment

Whereas in medium-sized and large states the workplace is generally

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separate from individuals' out-of-work activities, in small states many types of relationship are inextricably intertwined. Decision-makers are conscious of who is related to whom, who went to school with whom, and who has what influence in the parliament, town council, social club, church, etc..

Such networks have a strong positive side. Decision-makers have a wider view of the range of influences on specific situations and of the implications of their decisions. Wider relationships may also strengthen loyalties within the organisation. As noted in Jersey:

> Intimacy can contribute to excellent teamwork in which the strengths and weaknesses of individuals are well known, and in which 'playing to strengths' produces good results. Close relationships may also speed decision-making, and can generate trust and confidence.

However, a highly personalised environment can also be problematic. As the Jersey case study continued:

> First, innovation can be more difficult if it is 'known' that a particular person will be opposed to new ideas. Second, differences of personality may produce conflicts which are not easy to resolve in a small organisation. Conflicts can consume energy and time which would otherwise be directed at the Department's objectives, and the loss is proportionately greater in a small Department.

In a small society the potential for favouritism is greater, and official policies and procedures may be thwarted because 'friends-of-friends' have strong influence. Also, as noted in the St. Lucia case study, individuals may find it difficult to adjust from family and collegial relationships to the roles of superordinate/subordinate. Such factors may seriously reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of a ministry's operation.

Moreover, social divisions that are created or exacerbated by inappropriate management styles may take years to heal. On the one hand, once a position is taken, people may find it difficult to retract; and on the other hand, people get characterised in ways that they do not deserve. It was for the latter reason that the quotation from the Jersey case study put the word 'known' into inverted commas. Once perceptions have formed they may be difficult to change; and in this sense a good reputation can be as undeserved as a bad one. The onus is on senior management to be open-minded, and to maintain impartiality even under political pressure. Implied also is the importance of manage-

ment training as a vehicle for empowering senior management personnel to deal with these situations.

A further problem in small states, noted for example in the Seychelles study, is that administrators who make mistakes and are publicly or unofficially discredited have no distant postings to which to run. Nor can they easily gain second chances in different organisations elsewhere in the national capital. They have to face the consequences of their actions, not only on the job but also in the community. In this respect, officials in small states are more vulnerable than their counterparts in larger states.

Many administrators handle these situations by adhering closely to the rules. As noted in the Brunei Darussalam case study:

> The existence of personal links may lead to an expectation among colleagues that agreement over particular issues will necessarily be forthcoming, i.e. that it will be more difficult to say "no". Those experiencing such pressure may appeal to procedures specified by the Ministry or in the General Order in an effort to depersonalise their decisions.

The authors added the need for caution and consistency:

> Any lack of frankness is likely to be exposed in the longer run in such a small setting, and could be counterproductive.

Many governments also reduce interpersonal problems by using higher-level structures for final decision-making. In St. Lucia, for example, final decisions on appointment, discipline and dismissal of teachers are made by the Teaching Service Commission. The Public Service Commission is a parallel body for civil servants. The fact that recommendations on teachers made by the Ministry of Education must be approved by the Teaching Service Commission protects staff in the Ministry from accusations of favouritism. In the case of civil servants, moreover, the recommendations of the Ministry of Education are routed through the Ministry of Personnel. A similar system operates in Barbados. It may be argued that distancing of the decision-making process from the immediate divisional head weakens his direction and control over the unit concerned. However, diffusion of the locus of decision-making helps protect the interests and reputations of the individuals concerned.

Adherence to Bureaucratic Rules

Administrators in small states often have to follow bureaucratic rules much more closely than their counterparts in larger states.

To those who are not familiar with small states, this fact may be surprising. Small states are frequently characterised as highly personalised places in which everybody knows everybody else, and some observers assume that this permits much greater flexibility.

However, it is because *small states are highly personalised that adherence to bureaucratic rules becomes essential. Without such adherence, there is a strong likelihood of social strife following accusations of favouritism.*

Such accusations are certainly found in larger states. But because large societies are more diffuse, the impact of individual cases may be less serious or longlasting. Small states are more transparent, and the actions of individuals are known and commented upon much more widely than in large states.

2. Decision-Making Styles

Decision-making styles of course depend to a great extent on the personalities of the individuals making the decisions, and on the cultures in which they operate. As such one would expect wide variation, both within and among small states. Nevertheless, it is still possible to make some general observations.

A first point, linked to the observation about officers' multiple out-of-work connections, concerns formalisation of decisions which have been shaped informally. In all small societies officers hold informal discussions after work at the sports club, in the bar, in each others' homes, etc.. Sometimes, decision-making processes can be left informal; but on other occasions informal discussions should be followed up, formalised and set down on paper. Such formalisation might involve other people, both subordinate and superior, who feel that they should be part of the decision-making process, and would help reduce the dangers of rumour and backbiting. But sometimes decisions made

through informal channels are better left unrecorded, in order to avoid unnecessary conflict and frustration.

A second point returns to what in Chapter 1 was described as the need for 'managed intimacy' in small states. The effect of this on decision-making in at least one setting was indicated in the Brunei Darussalam case study, which noted that the management style has to reflect the need to sustain workable relationships at many levels. As a result:

> There is often an expressed preference for requesting or persuading rather than instructing. Individuals may be particularly sensitive to criticism which is open and confrontational in the 'western' mode. They may prefer more indirect, which are seen locally as more sensitive, means to resolve problems. This includes the consultative approach....

Of course this approach also reflects broad cultural aspects, and avoidance of confrontation may also be a feature of decision-making in large societies. However, the emphasis on consultation may be particularly important in small societies. Fortunately, it may also be easier to achieve.

Consultation was also stressed in the Seychelles case study, which further observed that administrators in small systems have the strong advantage that they are able to know personally the main actors in all parts of the system. The authors recommended that:

> officers should make the effort to get to know everyone in the Ministry from top to bottom. One way to do this is to organise periods in which Ministry staff live together for two or more days and devote 'brain storming' sessions to identification of problems and bottlenecks. Solutions can be formulated in small groups that have an informal atmosphere of frank and quiet reflection. These small groups should be composed of staff from different sections and ranks. This living together can facilitate understanding of human behaviour, and can promote interaction among co-workers. It can also permit senior staff to identify new talents, re-examine existing impressions, and monitor the performance of young officers.

Administrators elsewhere may be less enthusiastic about residential sessions away from the ministry. However, the point about the special advantages gained by administrators in small states is important. It was paralleled in the Barbados case study, the author of which wrote:

Systematically getting to know each officer on a one-to-one basis helps senior staff to maximise the advantages of a small organisation. This would be impossible in a large ministry, but can easily be achieved in a small one. I have already embarked on this task with gratifying results.

In small states, the emphasis on consultation in decision-making may be particularly important. And administrators in small states have the strong advantage that they can know personally the main actors in all parts of the system.

3. Dissemination of Information

The case study on Guyana pointed out that the nature of societies in small states may influence dissemination of information. The fact that in a small ministry many officers have long personal contact and intimate knowledge of each others' backgrounds:

> provides an opportunity to ensure that information and the subtle details of policy can be communicated along informal channels.

Also, in Guyana relatively junior functionaries believe themselves entitled to access to all senior staff:

> It is not unusual for junior officers to seek redress from the Permanent Secretary or Minister if they believe their points of view have not been given adequate hearing or if they believe that they have information which should reach the top quickly....
>
> However, these networks make it easier to influence decision-makers in dis-information and character assassination. The networks may also lead to confusion when information becomes distorted by extensive informal repetition.

The case study on St. Lucia presented a parallel perspective. It noted that the 'grapevine' is a very powerful agent in small ministries. Human-interest information, both positive and negative, tends to flow quickly within this informal network. People rapidly find out about promotions, transfers, sickness, personal accidents, etc..

However, other types of information may circulate less rapidly. As the St. Lucia case study added:

> the word of a meeting to be convened certainly does not spread as quickly. Indeed the administrator must ensure that the information is delivered to the individuals concerned, preferably in writing, as they tend to complain that they misunderstood the dates, times, or venues of the meetings. Formal communication therefore requires a considerable amount of effort involving memoranda, circulars and telephone messages.

It is clear that this viewpoint would be widely echoed. The Solomon Islands case study highlighted a curriculum workshop which was to be opened by Ministry officials. Although the officials were informed, communication was inadequate with the teachers. As a result, the officials turned up to an empty hall. Likewise the Kiribati case study described a case in which two new curriculum officers were appointed. The supervising officers assumed that the appointees were conversant with a consultancy report which had led to the creation of their jobs, and therefore that the officers understood the nature of both their jobs and the whole unit. Unfortunately the two officers had never seen the report, and without proper briefing by the supervising officer they spent one week doing virtually nothing.

When this Kiribati incident came to light, the Secretary for Education called a meeting of supervising officers and stressed the need to brief both new and old subordinates personally in order to encourage

questions and ensure understanding. This, he suggested, should be done at least once a month, with dates set well in advance. The Secretary also introduced briefing folders required to be available for inspection at any time.

Formal systems for dissemination of information also exist in other Ministries. In Jersey, standard instructions ensure that documents and letters are copied to appropriate section heads, and items dealing with current business are circulated among senior managers before filing. The system is not infallible, but it does at least help broaden awareness.

Yet it is obvious that small ministries cannot to produce the range of circulars and sophisticated newsletters of large ministries. Also, some bureaucracies have so many coordination meetings that the officers have little time for actual implementation. Nevertheless, good managers do succeed in ensuring good information flow. They use their judgement to ensure that all essential material is put in circulars but that individuals are not swamped by vast amounts of unnecessary paper. The essential point is that they do not *assume* that information has been disseminated simply because they are working in small organisations.

4. Allowing for Staff Absence

Another problem faced more acutely by small than by larger ministries arises from the absence of individuals, e.g. for personal leave, sickness, study or overseas travel. In a large ministry, the absence of a few individuals may not cause much inconvenience, particularly if they do not occupy key roles. But in a small ministry the same number of individuals would represent a greater proportion of the total workforce.

In such situations, if organisations lack effective management procedures the absence of individuals may cause major problems. First, the work of those individuals ceases until they return. This causes difficulties for people who need services to be performed. And if officers know that when they go away they will have to work even harder on their return, they may begin to make excuses to avoid travelling. In this case the new problem arising is that study tours and external visits are not undertaken, and important meetings are not attended.

To avoid such difficulties, it is necessary to ensure that:

- all concerned (i.e. both the individuals themselves and the organisations which call meetings) make careful assessments of whether travel really is necessary on each occasion;
- even if one individual is primarily responsible for a specific task

(e.g. selecting scholarship holders, or computing statistics), at least one other individual is aware of basic procedures and can take over if necessary;
- officers are required to prepare clear instructions for work which they expect to arise while they are away;
- more than one individual has authority to sign financial and other documents,
- records are orderly, complete and accessible; and
- individuals are discouraged from interpreting their own duty statements too narrowly.

Mutual understanding of colleagues' work may build up automatically when people expand their experience by taking different promotion posts, or when individuals are away and their colleagues cover for them. It may also be useful to rotate certain responsibilities among staff, and to appoint officially-recognised deputies. In some countries senior staff are also required to submit monthly reports of work done and objectives achieved. These reports both inform colleagues and enable them to assist if any officer has to be absent.

The Barbados authorities take this type of system one stage further by encouraging use of official diaries in which officers should make entries about each important event. The diaries are not to be taken away, but should be left at the desks relating to particular posts. The authorities also stress the importance of clear record-keeping. Supervisors should ensure that when they or those they supervise are away from their desks, careful notes are made on matters to be followed up during the period of absence. Notes should be put on file, and should indicate relevant file references, deadlines, contact persons, etc..

The ministry in St. Lucia also has a good system to reduce the problems of staff absence. Incoming and outgoing correspondence on matters of interest to the general administration and to specific sections is circulated to heads before signatures are appended. This requires circulation of a lot of paper; but it means that if any officer is absent, the others have at least some knowledge of the matter at hand. Information on highly confidential matters is of course not circulated in this way. For example, the Permanent Secretary may have access to information which should not be divulged to his deputy or to heads of sections. In this case it is difficult for the deputy to act when the Permanent Secretary is absent. But when the Permanent Secretary is away for an extended period, he uses his judgement on what information should be given to whom.

Technology to some extent reduces the problems arising from absence, but may also increase them. The good side is that technology

allows individuals who are far away to be contacted by telephone and fax. Also, the fact that computers make data-processing systems much more efficient releases staff time for other activities. However the other side, recognised for example in the Dominica case study, is that computers may make information less accessible than old-fashioned record cards. Unless computing expertise is held by several people, work may be seriously disrupted by the absence of key individuals. Senior administrators should be aware of this when designing new information-processing systems and when selecting people to operate them.

5. Building Teams

The previous section stresses the value of team work to cover for individuals who are absent. Team work may also of course have additional benefits. It may promote coordination and effectiveness, and may raise staff morale.

Development of team approaches is in some respects easier in small than in large states. When individuals are multi-functional, a small team may cover a wider range of responsibilities. It may therefore be easier to achieve broader perspectives and satisfactory coordination. Many governments of small states should make better use of this opportunity.

Barbados is one country in which great emphasis has been placed on team work and shared decision-making. Although the Minister has the main power, in practice he shares it with the senior staff. The Minister chairs an Educational Planning and Development Committee (EPADEC), which discusses policy matters. The author of the Barbados case study indicated that "the EPADEC is a very important body of which we in the Ministry are very proud".

It will be obvious, however, that good team work depends on trust and mutual respect. Where these relationships do not exist, they can never be replaced by handbooks and instructions. This was realised by the authorities in Montserrat, who therefore organised a team-building workshop, which they made residential and during which they forbade non-emergency telephone calls. According to one participant, the workshop built up a team spirit so effectively that "passing acquaintances turned into 'buddy-friends', and friends became like siblings".

Team work does have two potential drawbacks. First, it often takes much longer to reach a decision; and second, it may be difficult to identify individuals who deserve praise when affairs go well or blame when affairs go badly. Neither problem is insuperable, but both need

to be borne in mind.

However it is also worth noting the observation of a Permanent Secretary in Anguilla: "If you do not spend the time to get a consensus, you will waste other, scarcer resources." Small states may have special advantages in developing team work, and authorities would be well advised to try to utilise these advantages.

6. Inter-Ministry Links

Inter-ministry links are of course important in all states, both small and large. But in small states they are likely to assume a more prominent place in the daily life of individual ministries. They can also make major demands on those ministries.

Table 5 illustrates this point by showing some external bodies of which officers in the Ministry of Education & Culture in St. Lucia are members. Many staff have additional commitments of an *ad hoc* nature, e.g. on interview panels, planning committees, etc.. Officers may also be members of regional bodies, such as the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) and committees of the University of the West Indies (UWI).

Involvement with external bodies can be very useful:

- the officers gain experience which they can use in their main work, and they expand their circle of contacts;
- the skill that individuals display in work with external bodies enhances their reputations and as a result the image of the Ministry;
- external contacts add interest and help to circumvent boredom; and, not the least important,
- scarce skills are used to maximum advantage to serve the country as a whole.

However, the activities may also have a problematic side:

- the demands of the external bodies may be onerous and draining;
- the number of required meetings may cause officers either to neglect their home base or to perform their external commitments inadequately; and
- officers may find themselves enmeshed in conflicts of interest.

Table 5: Officers' Involvement in Other Government Bodies, Ministry of Education & Culture, St. Lucia

Permanent Secretary
- Vice Chairman, St. Lucia Development Bank Student Loans Scheme
- Chairman, National Task Force for Discipline
- Member of several Cabinet-appointed committees, including
  - Training Committee
  - Housing Committee
  - Reclassification Committee
  - Government Tenders Board
- Member, Sir Arthur Lewis Community College Board of Governors
- Member, Independence Day Celebrations Committee

Principal Assistant Secretary
- Chairman, Education Subcommittee, National Committee for Disaster Amelioration

Senior Accountant
- Member, National Carnival Development Committee

Statistician
- Member, National Population Council

Chief Education Officer
- Member, Government Salary Negotiating Team
- Member, Central Emergency Organisation

Education Officer (Curriculum)/Acting Deputy CEO
- Board Member, Radio St. Lucia

Education Officer (Pre-Schools)
- Member, National Council for the Disabled

Labour Market Information Counterpart
- Member, Road Safety Board

District Education Officer (Area 1)
- Member, Independence Day Celebrations Committee

Specialist Supervisor (Art)
- Member, Independence Day Celebrations Committee

Director of Culture
- Member, Independence Day Celebrations Committee
- Member, National Carnival Development Committee

These points were reflected in several case studies. For example the Montserrat study noted that external involvements:

> consume valuable time which could have been invested in direct educational administration, but they give Ministry officials valuable knowledge of and insights into contemporary developments which impact on, and which are impacted on by, the educational enterprise. They can acquire a broader view of the environment and culture in which they operate. Indeed their own education is enhanced and their horizons widened.

The Botswana, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Barbados case studies presented similar viewpoints.

It must be added that contribution of services to other ministries need not be just a one-way process, for the Ministry of Education may also benefit from the expertise of individuals elsewhere. One useful strategy is for the Ministry of Education to encourage its officers to work for other organisations on the understanding that 'credits' could be built up and exchanged for expertise which those organisations have but which the Ministry of Education lacks.

The challenge for senior administrators is therefore to judge which external commitments should be welcomed and which should be resisted. The multitude of external as well as internal commitments also emphasises the importance of efficient management of time, to ensure that all essential tasks are done properly.

7. Summary

This chapter began with discussion of management issues in the personalised environment of small states. Close interpersonal relationships can be a strong advantage, but they need to be handled carefully. The first section noted the need for ministries to have clear operational procedures, and stressed the need for impartiality even under political pressure. For harmonious and productive operation, such impartiality must not only exist; it must also be seen to exist.

The second section approached the related topic of decision-making. It noted that decision-making styles of course depend on the cultures and personalities concerned, but that small states perhaps have a stronger need for decision-making by consensus. This analysis fitted into the framework of 'managed intimacy' introduced in Chapter 1.

The chief message of the third section was that even in small ministries it is necessary to pay attention to mechanisms for dissemina-

tion of information. Examples were presented of problems that had arisen because senior administrators simply assumed that information had been disseminated when in fact it had not.

Fourthly, the chapter noted that in small ministries the absence of individuals may have a much more serious effect than it would in larger ministries. To reduce difficulties it is necessary to maintain good record-keeping and briefing systems. It is also important for individuals to be multi-functional, able to cover for their colleagues. It helps if the Ministry has developed good teamwork. Some experiences in this aspect were described in Section 5.

Finally, the chapter discussed inter-ministry links. Of course these are important in medium-sized and large ministries as well as small ones; but in small ministries they are more likely to form a prominent feature of daily life. The challenge for senior administrators is to keep external commitments in balance. This requires good time-management and selectivity.

Further Reading

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Chapter 5:

Personnel and Training

Of course discussion of personnel issues could have been, and to some extent was, contained in the two preceding chapters on organisation and management. However, the topic requires more detailed treatment, and as such deserves a separate chapter.

Discussion here begins by addressing questions of job definition. In small states it is often difficult to define jobs, particularly because individuals have to be multi-functional, and because job requirements may constantly change.

Once needs have been defined, it is necessary to find people to perform the work. This matter is the focus of the second section, which comments on sources of personnel for both long and short-term assignments.

The third section turns to career paths. In many small ministries problems arise from the limited number of promotion posts. Administrators have to seek ways to secure some job mobility and to find ways to motivate staff in what may otherwise be a stagnant environment.

The focus on career paths overlaps with that on appraisal systems, discussed in the fourth section. In many small states it is difficult to appraise the work of specialists, especially when the postholders are the only people in the country with full understanding of what needs to be appraised. Also, appraisal systems have to be adjusted to allow for the highly personalised frameworks of small states in which many people are inter-related or have other out-of-work connections.

The fifth section turns to the planning of training. Because of staffing constraints small states may find it difficult to find people and time to draw up training plans; but the cost of failing to produce plans is so high that it deserves to become a priority.

Finally, the chapter moves from training plans to training strategies. It notes five main ways in which small states may secure training. These include in-house training, overseas courses, and distance education.

1. Job Definition

In all ministries, and indeed in all bureaucracies, it is essential to have at least some definition of individual jobs. Usually this is done through job descriptions or duty statements that are attached to specific posts. A job description guides the individual and others about what that individual is supposed to do, and provides a basis for evaluation of performance. However, in small ministries job definitions may need to be more flexible than in large ministries.

Among problems of job definition highlighted in the Commonwealth case studies were:

a) *Multi-functionalism*. Many officers in small ministries have to undertake multiple functions. The work they actually do is often determined not so much by a professional master-plan but by the skills they happen to possess and the gaps in the skills of their colleagues. It is for such reasons that in Seychelles, for example, the financial controller also works as an assistant accountant, the Director of Educational Planning & Development also teaches, the Director of Administration also works as a computer operator, and curriculum development staff also take responsibilities for school supervision and examinations. Rarely are such disparate roles actually built into the individuals' duty statements.

b) *Flexibility*. It cannot be assumed that individuals who perform multi-functional roles at particular points in time will always undertake those particular tasks. Much depends on what is needed and who else is available to do it. Officers in small ministries often have to cover for colleagues who are absent. Sometimes these duties take them outside their ministries altogether. For example an officer of the Ministry of Education might be needed periodically as an interpreter for visiting foreign delegations, or as an enumerator in the census.

c) *Changing priorities*. In all bureaucracies it is necessary from time to time to review and revise job descriptions. The extent to which officers' roles change may be particularly marked in small bureaucracies. For example the existence of short-term aid projects may sharply alter activities. In one year aid projects might focus on adult literacy, but in another year they might focus on primary school curriculum. It may not be easy to predict these changes.

d) *Lack of specialists to draw up specialist job descriptions*. Small states, almost by definition, have few personnel in individual

Maximising Use of Expertise

In small ministries it is essential to maximise use of all available expertise, even if the current official duty statements of specific officers are unrelated to particular tasks at hand.

This point was emphasised in the case study on Botswana, where most department heads have had varied careers within and sometimes also outside the education system. The Chief Education Officer in charge of primary education and teacher training, for example, might have some knowledge of secondary education through previous experience as a Senior Education Officer in that sector.

Recognising this, the top managers in Botswana harness experience through committees. For instance, the working committee on Improving Access to Secondary Education incorporates the CEO (Nonformal Education), the Director (Unified Teaching Service), and the CEO (Primary & Teacher Training) as well as the CEO (Secondary). Although the present jobs of these individuals may be unrelated to the task at hand, their previous experiences are too valuable to be wasted.

An additional benefit of this arrangement arises from the involvement of officers from a wide range of units. This helps those officers to gain an overview of the direction of change in the system as a whole, which in turn may help them to do their own jobs more effectively. This may be another aspect in which 'small is beautiful'.

specialisms. When a new post is created, e.g. for a public relations officer or a school nutritionist, there may not be anyone with sufficient expertise to draw up a proper job description. Sometimes specialists are recruited on very vague criteria and are left to determine their own duties as they see fit.

e) *Job descriptions made to fit individuals*. Chapter 3 pointed out that small states have to maximise use of the expertise that is available to them. Sometimes this means that posts are created with specific individuals in mind. The case study from Kiribati, for example, indicated that this was true of the Chief Education

Officer post. But when that individual retires, resigns or is promoted, the job description has to be rewritten. Often this makes it also necessary to rewrite the job descriptions of several other people, to ensure that all essential areas are covered.

These points underline the need for job descriptions which are neither too vague nor too detailed. Job descriptions that are too vague lead to misinterpretations and disputes; but ones which are too detailed place the public service and the individual in a strait-jacket which restricts the flexibility and improvisation necessary in the limited labour environment of small states. As in all organisations, but perhaps especially in small ministries which are organisationally fluid, it is also necessary to review job statements from time to time.

2. Sources of Personnel

Once needs have been identified, administrators have to find people to undertake the work. This section focuses on recruitment first for permanent posts, and then for short-term assignments.

(a) Permanent Posts

The main source of personnel in small states is of course comparable to that in medium-sized and large states, i.e. the local labour market. However, states with small populations have small pools of professional personnel. This is particularly true of states with young education systems. The question then is how the pool can be enlarged.

Two major ways may be presented here. The first is to encourage nationals who have emigrated to other countries to come back home. This has been a strong policy in Barbados and other countries of the English-speaking Caribbean which advertise senior posts overseas as well as locally. To make conditions more attractive, contracts often include gratuities and passages for the officers and their families.

The second strategy is to employ expatriates. This has been particularly prominent in the less developed countries of Africa and the South Pacific. For instance at the time of writing the Solomon Islands case study the Principal Examinations Officer, the acting CEO (Planning), the acting SEO (Nonformal), and the adviser to the Implementation and Planning Unit were all expatriates. External recruitment may also be prominent in Jersey, where even the Director of Education is an expatriate.

Both these strategies, it must be recognised, have attendant problems:

- It may be difficult to locate suitably qualified nationals who are abroad and who are willing to return home, and the advertising and interviewing process may be both costly and time consuming. Also, external recruitment may cause resentment at home. The Barbados case study indicated that "the policy is sometimes criticised by those who have laboured locally only to see Barbadian nationals return from abroad to fill coveted posts".
- Employment of expatriates tends to be even more costly, and may arouse even stronger opposition. It does nothing to reduce unemployment at home, and it is not always easy to find expatriates who have both the required professional skills and desirable social and political attitudes. The Maldives case study noted a further problem arising from the lack of diplomatic missions abroad. To reduce this problem the authorities envisage use of commercial firms and Ministries of Education in friendly countries; but this solution is not completely satisfactory.

Enlarging the Pool of Expertise

Ministries in small countries may be handicapped by the size of the pool from which they can draw expertise. Some Ministries of Education make this problem worse by recruiting the majority or even all their staff from among teachers and school principals. This practice has been noted in countries far apart as Botswana and Solomon Islands.

While it is of course important for Ministry of Education staff to understand the realities of classroom and school life, limitation of recruitment to this pool imposes an undesirable restriction. For many Ministry of Education jobs, direct teaching experience is not essential. Such jobs include manpower planning, accounting, and distribution of materials. Indeed the work of the ministry may be enhanced by the perspectives of individuals who have worked in other sectors, to to complement those who have worked in the school system.

Because of these factors even the richest governments, such as that of Brunei Darussalam, have to give first priority to the domestic supply of labour. Nevertheless, it is widely agreed that total reliance on the domestic pool of labour causes more problems than it solves. The Barbados case study suggests that "the alternative [to external recruitment] is inbreeding, with resulting problems which are perhaps worse". Many small states send high-level missions abroad to secure recruitment of appropriate people.

(b) Short-Term Work

Small states with flexible employment terms of service can often secure the services of good people for short-term assignments by giving them specific contracts. Such arrangements are particularly useful for people who have retired, or who have left the service for other reasons (e.g. in the case of women who want more time for their families). Through this mechanism people who have left recently can be brought back to work on specific and well-defined tasks in operational positions. Part-time and flexi-time arrangements also help improve access to people of this type.

Some ministries, especially in the Caribbean, also keep directories of nationals who are resident abroad but who may be available for short-term assignments. Such assignments might include preparation of architectural drawings, artwork, book designs, etc.. Sometimes the work can be done in the specialist's place of residence rather than actually in-country.

Much short-term consultancy work is also conducted by expatriates. Appropriate people may be recruited regionally as well as from more distant countries. They can provide:

- expertise which is not readily available within the country,
- fresh perspectives based on the experiences of other countries,
- neutrality in the context of local rivalries and pressures, and
- time.

With regard to the last point, the Barbados case study noted that although senior ministry personnel do have considerable expertise, they are so busy with the multitude of daily tasks requiring attention in small countries that they do not have the time for certain types of detailed professional work. Recruitment of external consultants helps tackle this problem. An additional benefit noted by the Barbados study is that "formal and informal discussions with visitors provide the intellectual

stimulus that is often lacking in small countries".

However, it must also be recognised that use of consultants encounters difficulties. Most obviously:

- the consultants may not have appropriate cultural understanding of the countries in which they work;
- the consultants' previous experience may be in medium-sized and large countries, and their recommendations may be inappropriate to small countries;
- the external consultants do not know the detailed intricacy of the small society and the personalities involved;
- consultants usually work on specific assignments only for short periods of time, and
- external consultants are usually expensive.

Sources of Consultancy Expertise: The TOKTEN Programme

Small states have many sources of consultancy expertise. They can make direct arrangements, or they can go through international organisations and donor agencies.

One useful source is the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) programme of the United Nations. The programme enables governments to use the expertise of nationals who are no longer locally resident but who have good understanding of local conditions. The programme may be particularly valuable to small states with high emigration rates.

In 1988 and 1989, the programme enabled the Ministry of Education in Guyana to recruit eight overseas Guyanese. The consultants came for periods ranging from two weeks to three months, and assisted in:

- *development of the medium-term education plan,*
- *editing of skill-reinforcement guides for primary teachers,*
- *training of science, guidance and remedial-reading teachers, and*
- *training of teacher educators.*

Nevertheless, awareness of these difficulties is the first step towards avoiding them. Small states may be assisted to find appropriate consultants by international organisations, some of which have the interests of small states specifically at heart. The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation is among these.* Also, it is often possible to secure consultant services free of charge through foreign aid programmes.

3. Career Paths

Small ministries may face major problems in achieving smooth career paths. These problems particularly arise from the small number of senior posts allocated to the ministry.

- On the one hand, movement of one or two people may trigger mobility for almost everybody else further down the system.
- But on the other hand if people at the top do not move, the advancement of all those below them may be permanently blocked.

Although the former case was cited in the case study from The Gambia, the latter case seems more common. It was given particular attention in Botswana, Jersey and St. Lucia. In such a framework individuals who are lucky may find themselves in senior posts at very young ages; but those who are unlucky may find themselves almost permanently blocked simply because their seniors are just a few years older.

One result of this type of situation in Botswana has been the tendency for individuals to try to upgrade their posts by inflating the breadth and levels of their responsibility. This is one reason why the Botswana ministry has five individuals titled Chief Education Officer. The need for mobility has also led to a reclassification of posts in St. Lucia.

The government of Montserrat reduces the problem of stagnation by requiring retirement at the age of 55. However this creates a new difficulty, for it excludes from the system individuals with valuable skills and experience. The loss of such expertise at an age when most people are still active may be felt particularly acutely in a small system.

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* Write to: The Director, CFTC, Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX, UK. [Fax: 071 930 0827].

Seychelles, by contrast, has a slightly different problem. Unlike the bottom-heavy administrative pyramids of many larger countries, Seychelles has a top-heavy structure. Whereas in bottom-heavy systems individuals may feel frustrated because they see little chance of moving to the top, in Seychelles they are likely to be frustrated because individuals fresh from professional training start somewhere near the top and then find that there are few more steps to go.

The irony here is that both types of situation lead to a drain of qualified manpower to countries where greater opportunities are available. One method employed in Seychelles to overcome the problem is the switching of personnel from one ministry to another in the hope that new environments and responsibilities will boost motivation. This strategy also promotes multi-functionalism. However, in Seychelles implementation has not yet been entirely satisfactory, and usually the approach is only possible with personnel who are not over-specialised or who have retrained in different fields. Compulsory transfer has also been discussed in Jersey, but has not yet been implemented there because it has been widely seen as threatening and disruptive.

The stronger promotion prospects of generalists were mentioned in several case studies. In Barbados, for example:

> Promotion of Ministry staff is principally based on merit, but generalists who have administrative and other experience in more than one section/role tend to have the edge.

Moreover:

> Where specialists are promoted to senior and essentially administrative posts, they have to give up their specialist functions e.g. in science, mathematics or language arts.

This type of framework is common but wasteful. Small states can ill-afford to underutilise the specialist expertise of available people. One solution proposed in Barbados, though not yet implemented, is to give posts different levels according to the incumbents rather than according to the tasks. This is a common principle in universities, where a course on philosophy of education, for example, might be taught be a lecturer, a senior lecturer or a full professor. In the university world, individuals who commence as lecturers but who wish to be promoted do not normally have to sacrifice their professional expertise. This sort of model could be useful in large ministries as well as small ones; but it is perhaps especially desirable in small states, which face a stronger necessity to use limited human resources effectively.

The Problems of Blocked Promotion: An Example from Kiribati

In 1989, the average age of all officers in the top three tiers the Kiribati Ministry of Education was just 37. The compulsory retirement age was 50. Many staff at lower levels realised that their chances of promotion were very poor, and therefore left the Ministry to seek brighter prospects elsewhere.

Those at the top of the structure might consider themselves fortunate to have been promoted at such a young age. But the age structure also caused difficulties. What could be done in this type of situation to alleviate the problem?

4. Staff Appraisal

Effective staff development must rely on a good appraisal system. Some type of appraisal is highly desirable in all ministries, both large and small. Appraisal schemes assist senior officials in identifying the strong and the weak members of their staffs, and thus facilitating decisions on promotion and further training. In ideal circumstances, appraisal is closely linked to counselling.

Most basic principles of appraisal and counselling are applicable in all organisations, and do not require detailed examination here. Readers who wish to examine these basic principles are referred to the 'Further Reading' section at the end of the chapter. However, it is relevant to note the specific features of appraisal and counselling in small ministries.

(a) Some Problems

Whereas in large ministries the functions of appraisal and counselling can be undertaken by separate individuals, in small ministries the tasks are usually undertaken jointly by single individuals. In many respects this is advantageous, for it promotes linkages. However, in small and sensitive communities the task of giving positive guidance to weak individuals may be very challenging. Special training may be needed.

It may also be advantageous to share these crucial responsibilities with super-ministerial entities, such as the Establishment and Training Divisions.

Second, small ministries find it difficult to appraise specialists. For instance the Barbados case study indicated that there was only one educational psychologist in the whole country, and nobody else had a sufficiently strong professional base to appraise what that educational psychologist did. The Seychelles case study made a similar observation:

> For example if an officer is made responsible for development of a subject curriculum, it is simply assumed that the officer will perform well. If performance is poor, top decision-makers are unlikely to know about it unless they are themselves specialists in that area.

The third point is again linked to the sociological features of small states. Even in large societies it is not uncommon for supervisors to grade almost all staff as 'average'. They do this partly because it seems easier, and partly because it avoids confrontation with subordinates who deserve negative rankings. As stressed in the Kiribati case study, in small and highly personalised societies the need to avoid confrontation is very strong, for supervisors who give negative rankings are still likely to meet their subordinates regularly in a wide range of social settings. Yet the pressure to grade most people as average reduces the value of the whole appraisal exercise.

(b) Some Solutions

One solution, employed in such states as Jersey and Solomon Islands, is to develop schemes for self-appraisal. Such schemes are widely used in jobs of all sorts and countries of all sizes, but they may be particularly valuable in small states. Self-appraisal schemes may be directed more towards job satisfaction than to pay and promotion. As such, they also help tackle the problems of stagnation in a restricted hierarchy.

A second strategy, used for example in Dominica, is to use a Management by Objectives approach to appraisal. This approach reduces the difficulties in appraising specialists. Instead of expecting one person, usually the immediate superior, to appraise the work of specialists, a wider range of people with whom the specialists have worked are invited to comment. In this strategy, appraisal becomes more of a collaborative exercise. It has to be conducted carefully and sensitively to avoid severe interpersonal tensions, but when the atmos-

phere is right this type of system can work well. Perhaps one key is to avoid specific ratings, for these are typically the greatest source of conflict, and are not always needed.

A third solution, noted in the Barbados case study, is to invite overseas consultants to assist in appraisal. However, this strategy may be expensive, could require a lot of organisation, and could cause serious interpersonal tension. Because of these factors the strategy is not used very often, except perhaps in an indirect way when overseas visitors are asked to evaluate projects and therefore by implication those responsible for the projects.

Finally and perhaps most commonly, ministry officers may use informal methods for appraisal. The Solomon Islands case study indicated that:

Appraisal Procedures: The Seychelles Pattern

According to the Seychelles case study, staff appraisal in that country is achieved by such processes as:

- *observing the quality of the end-products,*
- *observing the techniques used in the execution of duties,*
- *studying interpersonal relationships,*
- *soliciting information from co-workers in a casual way,*
- *visiting the work place and talking to the people concerned, and*
- *noting the remarks of those who are affected by the person concerned.*

"Official appraisal forms are completed jointly by employees and employers, and occasional inspections are carried out by superiors or their representatives. However, informal monitoring permits 'in-course' correction, which is essential in a state with many inexperienced administrators. Further, when working with a small pool of people, the emphasis of appraisal is mainly on training and increased efficiency. These objectives and processes seem more appropriate to a small and young nation trying to develop its civil service."

> In practice, assessments tend to be based on guesstimates.... In essence, a lot of 'weighing' is practised, even in the only staff confidential report which is made out annually.

Similar comments were made in the Maldives case study:

> Individuals are often put through a subtle process of weighing up, a process known locally as 'vakaru jehun'.

The case study authors pointed out that this informal appraisal encountered problems of subjectivity and unreliability. In small systems it is not always realistic to expect complex and time-consuming formal procedures; but there does seem to be a case for at least some formalisation.

5. Training Plans

The case studies of Solomon Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and Maldives lamented the absence of overall training plans to guide decision-making and facilitate rational use of resources. For these countries many training opportunities are available through external aid projects, but in Solomon Islands "because no proper analysis has yet been carried out on national requirements, most training is only loosely tied to the country's needs". One result of the lack of a training plan in Dominica is that individuals who have acquired specialist skills abroad are often discontented on their return because they find little opportunity to use these skills. And in Montserrat there is a tendency for officers "to serve before they are trained and then either to leave after training or to be promoted out of particular positions."

The Seychelles case study emphasised the value of experience as well as of formal qualifications:

> Education by its very nature needs highly qualified staff. Apart from some personnel in the Administration Division and the support staff of other divisions, all officers within the headquarters need academic qualifications plus, in certain cases, additional qualifications in educational administration. However, education is one field in which no amount of qualification can compensate for lack of experience....

Yet provision of experience also needs to be planned. Efficient use of resources can only occur when senior administrators know what

experience and training they want for their officers, and then identify ways to get it.

Of course production of training plans is more easily recommended than achieved, especially in small states which are short of manpower. However, the cost of not preparing good plans may be high, for small states may fail to use efficiently the limited manpower resources which they do have.

Efficient use of resources requires a training plan. Small states may feel that they lack the manpower to draw up such plans; but the high long-run costs of failing to prepare plans require such preparation to be a priority.

From the small-state viewpoint, the background factors to be considered during preparation of training plans will include:

- *The need for multi-functional administrators*. This need has been mentioned frequently in this book. In the words of the Jersey case study, training of multi-functional administrators "is a basic necessity for survival, not a mere theoretical interest".

  But it is easier to advocate than to achieve such multi-functional training. Small states do not want 'Jacks of all trades and masters of none'; rather they need 'Jacks of at least several trades, and masters of all of them'.

The advice of a senior administrator in Tonga is to allow individuals to begin by specialising, so that they can at least become masters of limited fields and can build up their self-confidence. Experience suggests that such people will then be able to diversify and to acquire additional specialisms.

- *Expertise in training*. States with small populations rarely have trainers in all the required specialisms. Good trainers must have (i) knowledge of their subject, and (ii) skills in communication and teaching. Individuals who have both these attributes may be scarce. For in-country training, small states often have to recruit trainers from abroad.
- *High direct costs*. Recruitment of foreign trainers requires payment of fees, travel and accommodation. Unit costs are increased by the low numbers attending courses in small states. One solution is to send trainees abroad, but that may also be expensive.
- *High opportunity costs*. In small states it may be particularly difficult to release staff for training. In a small ministry, the absence of three or four people is felt much more seriously than in a large ministry.

  The other side of this coin, though, is that small ministries are less able afford *not* to send people for training. When human resources are scarce, it becomes even more important to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.
- *Formation of larger groups*. Education personnel may sometimes be grouped with officers from other ministries to form groups of sufficient size to justify training programmes. This may create difficulties in meeting the specialist needs of each officer, but it can have the additional benefit of promoting linkages across the public service.

6. Training Strategies

Bearing in mind the above points, it is useful to note five main categories of training strategy.

(a) In-House Training

To some extent, in-house training comes naturally. Individuals learn how to do jobs simply through experience. This happens in organisations of all types, and in countries of all sizes. But it is often desirable to

structure in-house and on-the-job training in order to maximise efficiency. A particular advantage for small ministries is that staff can gain training without having to leave their posts.

Some types of in-house training can be achieved entirely with internal resources. There is great potential benefit in a structure which makes senior managers trainers and mentors to more junior staff. Ideally, the Permanent Secretary should take a direct interest in professional staff development, ensuring that officers are given a range of experiences in different functions.

Other types of in-house training may be undertaken with resources from elsewhere in the country. In all countries, much help with in-service training may be gained from other ministries in the public service. Many the countries also have institutions of higher education with appropriate expertise.

Some governments also harness external resources for in-house training. Seychelles, for example, has made considerable use of foreign consultants. Sometimes the consultants are recruited specifically for training. On other occasions the consultants are employed for such tasks as design of laboratories, help with manpower plans, or establishment of computer systems, but are asked to undertake training as well.

Yet even if consultants are not specifically asked to undertake training, one would hope that the comment made in the Montserrat case study would also apply in other contexts. According to the authors, "it is difficult for sensitive officers not to glean from external consultants some knowledge of what obtains elsewhere". As they pointed out, this fact helps to enhance the general awareness and the 'critical climate' of the Ministry.

(b) Domestic Institutions

Despite the constraints of small size, many small states do have impressive local institutions. The University of Malta, for example, is a respected institution with a history exceeding 400 years. Other small states with universities include Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Guyana, Mauritius and Western Samoa. These institutions provide both conceptual and skills training in a wide range of subjects.

Other small states feel it inappropriate to try to operate full universities, but do nevertheless have important lower-level institutions. Table 6 lists some post-secondary colleges in Commonwealth small states. A significant number were established quite recently. They cannot meet all needs, but they can certainly assist in some areas.

Table 6: Multi-Faceted Post-Secondary Colleges in Selected Commonwealth States

Institution	*Year of Foundation*
Barbados Community College	1968
College of the Bahamas	1974
Antigua State College	1977
The Gambia College	1979
Clifton Dupigny Community College (Dominica)	1982
Seychelles Polytechnic	1983
Solomon Islands College of Higher Education	1985
Sir Arthur Lewis Community College (St. Lucia)	1986
St. Kitts & Nevis College of Further Education	1988
Tonga Community Development & Training Centre	1988
Grenada National College	1988

(c) Regional Cooperation

Among the best-known regional training institutions are the University of the West Indies (UWI) and the University of the South Pacific (USP). UWI opened in 1948 and serves 14 countries; and USP opened 1968 and serves 11 countries. The two institutions have had a major impact on the development of their regions. Both universities offer training in educational administration as well as in other skills essential to ministries of education.

It must be recognised that regional cooperation is often fragile. UWI and USP have so far survived the tensions of member states pulling in different directions, but the University of Botswana, Lesotho & Swaziland collapsed in the mid-1970s. Also, some member countries have found UWI and USP unresponsive to their specific needs. For example the Solomon Islands case study indicated that:

> some USP courses much needed by this country have recently been abolished. Among them have been the B.Ed. and Diploma courses, which were cut simply because only Solomon Islands and a few other smaller countries still needed them.

Another strategy which is much less structured but which still has great value uses networks of professionals. For example the Caribbean Network of Educational Innovation for Development (CARNEID) has organised training programmes in school administration, educational

planning, book development, and reading. Such networks are of course open to large states as well as small ones. However, they are particularly important to small states because they emphasise regional or group implementation of programmes, thus permitting sharing of scarce expertise and financial resources.

Of course the whole notion of regional cooperation depends on the existence of other countries with which to cooperate. Some small states are geographically isolated, with few neighbours who face comparable circumstances. Seychelles, for example, is over 1,500 kilometres from the African continent, with which in any case it shares few cultural bonds. Brunei Darussalam and The Gambia are less isolated, but their neighbours are large and are not interested in the sort of cooperation found in the Caribbean and the South Pacific.

Nevertheless, it must be repeated that in many cases regional cooperation is both possible and highly beneficial. It is an important way through which many small states meet at least some training needs.

(d) Foreign Institutions

Another alternative is for small states to send their personnel for training outside the region. There are several advantages in this practice, especially when:

- the limited number of officials requiring training, or the total costs involved, do not justify a local or regional course;
- the required staff and facilities are not available in the small state;
- the variety of expertise, the academic level and innovative content of the course offered abroad are much higher in quality than anything the small state or region can offer;
- the costs of training, travel and accommodation are met by a donor agency or by the host government; and
- the small states desire flexibility which they would lose if they established their own institutions.

On the negative side there is a danger of irrelevance if courses are dominated by the perspectives of the host country. But, as noted by the Dominica case study, this may be balanced by the widening of perspectives which trainees can achieve. Trainees can be exposed to administrative practices, academic ideas and general educational orientations which may enrich their personal and professional perspectives. Encounters with professionals from the host country and from other states

Identifying Appropriate Courses in Foreign Institutions

When selecting overseas courses for training, small states may feel handicapped by a lack of information about what is available. This need may be reduced through personal contacts, e.g. with visiting consultants and with staff of institutions in which Ministry officers have already received training. However, several publications might provide more might provide more systematic information. Perhaps the most useful are:

- *a Unesco publication entitled* Study Abroad. *It is updated every three years, and is available from: Unesco, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75700, Paris, France. As well as a list of courses, it includes a directory of scholarships.*
- *The* Commonwealth Universities Yearbook, *published annually by the Association of Commonwealth Universities, 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H OPF, UK. The Yearbook does not include information on courses, but it does list addresses, staff and departments in Commonwealth Universities.*

Additional publications available through commercial outlets include:

- *Commission of the European Communities,* Higher Education in the European Community: A Directory of Courses and Institutions in 12 Countries, *Kogan Page, London. [revised every few years]*
- The World of Learning, *Europa Publications, London. [revised every two years; contains addresses of institutions, but no information on courses]*

The Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration also helps with information. Write to the CCEA Secretariat, University of New England, Armidale, NSW 2351, Australia; Fax: 067 73 3122.

give trainees opportunities to exchange views, test techniques and share experiences which eventually can be considered for possible adoption at home.

Moreover, trainees may gain friends and professional contacts who may be invaluable resource people and who may greatly assist the operation of the Ministry of Education after the trainees have returned home. This type of international interaction helps small states to overcome the danger of isolation. Also, trainees may return with a degree of enthusiasm which, if well channelled, spreads to colleagues.

Some small states seek the best combination of expertise, flexibility and relevance by linking up with specific institutions, often with formal contracts. For example,

- Seychelles has a formal contract with the University of Sussex (UK),
- Gibraltar and the British Virgin Islands have had a similar arrangement with the University of Hull (UK),
- Jersey has a special relationship with the Universities of Exeter and Southampton, and with Portsmouth Polytechnic (UK),
- Guyana has formal ties with the Universities of Manchester (UK) and Ohio (USA), and
- Solomon Islands has had particular links with the University of Sydney (Australia).

These special relationships may tie the small states to individual institutions more than is always desirable, but they do mean that a body of staff in each institution develops understanding of the specific circumstances of the small states.

The fact that small states can be in quite a strong bargaining position is illustrated by the fact that the Seychelles arrangement with the University of Sussex was only formalised after the Seychelles government had also asked for, and received, tenders from three other institutions in the UK. The Seychelles government also invested in quality control by sending a delegation to visit the institutions before making the final decision. The exercise can require a lot of time and money, but such initial investment is likely to pay off.

(e) Distance Education

Distance education provides a final noteworthy strategy through which individuals in small states may gain education and training. It is a key mechanism through which UWI and USP serve their small member

countries. By using satellites and other forms of technology, the institutions are able to link students in different countries for interactive tutorial work. Distance education programmes also use printed materials and correspondence. The USP has operated a special distance education course in educational administration for Solomon Islands and Cook Islands.

In other cases, small states use the institutions of larger countries. For example, several Mauritians are enrolled on the courses of the UK Open University, and Massey University in New Zealand runs distance education programmes in which South Pacific students have participated.

Of particular significance, at least for Commonwealth countries, is a new institution which makes a wide array of distance-teaching programmes available throughout the Commonwealth. While not specifically focused on the needs of small states, the 'Commonwealth of Learning' could nevertheless be of considerable assistance. Brunei Darussalam has been a major contributor to the Commonwealth of Learning, and is now paying particular attention to the ways in which

Distance Education and the Commonwealth of Learning

The Commonwealth of Learning was established in 1988 with its headquarters in Vancouver, Canada. It promotes Cooperation in distance education within the Commonwealth. Although not set up specifically to help small states, the Commonwealth of Learning may be of great benefit to them. It helps promote education and training in countries which would otherwise be disadvantaged.

The Commonwealth of Learning does not itself enrol students. Rather, it facilitates enrolment in existing colleges and universities. Its main thrusts are to:

- *promote development and encourage the sharing of distance-teaching materials,*
- *help with staff training and programme evaluation, and*
- *facilitate the exchange of credit between institutions.*

Write to: COL, 1700-777 Dunsmuir Street, Box 10428, Vancouver, Canada V7Y 1K4. Fax: 604-660-7472.

distance learning can meet its training needs.

Again, however, it is necessary to sound a note of caution. Effective distance education requires considerable infrastructure to support students in what otherwise becomes a dispiriting, lonely and difficult activity. Moreover, the fact that few students in individual small states are likely to take specific courses militates against production of materials which are completely relevant to those students' needs.

7. Summary

Focusing on personnel matters, this chapter began by noting the complexities of defining jobs in small states. The first section stressed the need for job definitions which are neither too vague nor too detailed. In all organisations, but perhaps especially in small ministries which are organisationally fluid, it is also necessary to review job definitions from time to time.

The second section turned to sources of personnel for Ministries of Education in small states. Of course the main source will be the local labour force; but some governments expand this pool by enticing home nationals who have emigrated to other countries, and by recruiting expatriates. The chapter also discussed the uses of consultants in small systems. Ministries can recruit consultants through their own networks, or they may use international organisations and aid agencies.

Thirdly, the chapter focused on career paths. The restricted number of people in senior posts in small ministries means either that movement of a few individuals at the top causes great mobility all the way down or, more commonly, that lack of movement of people at the top causes stagnation for the whole organisation. Ways to tackle the problems of limited career paths and stagnation in small states include:

- encouraging job rotation within the ministry (perhaps accompanied by retraining),
- encouraging mobility between ministries (perhaps also accompanied by retraining),
- creating a structure which can allow individuals to be promoted without abandoning their specialisms, and
- setting a low compulsory retirement age.

None of these methods is entirely straightforward, but each has its own merits.

Schemes for staff appraisal may also be shaped to fit the reality of restricted career prospects. Partly for this reason, the schemes in some

small states focus more on self-appraisal and job satisfaction than on promotion within the hierarchy. Discussion in Section 4 noted that emphasis on self-appraisal also avoids some of the problems arising from the close interpersonal relationships of small states.

Section 5 turned to training, and began by stressing the need for training plans. Of course such plans are needed in all ministries, both large and small; but they may be especially necessary in small ministries because human resources are too scarce to be used inefficiently. Some small states devote attention to other priorities and neglect training plans. That is understandable, but it cannot be recommended.

Finally, the chapter outlined some strategies for training. These are of course numerous and varied. They include in-house training, use of local, regional and foreign institutions, and distance education. Each strategy may be useful in particular circumstances, and small states may seek appropriate combinations.

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Chapter 6:

International Linkages

International linkages are generally much more prominent in small states than in large ones. Small states have limited facilities for domestic production, and therefore import a high proportion of their goods and services. Many small states also see great benefit from joining international and regional organisations. Finally, small states are likely to feature prominently in the aid programmes of bilateral and multilateral agencies.

One reason why membership of international organisations is highly prized is that it confers identity. Such membership is a symbol to peoples that they are part of distinct states, rather than being more anonymous occupants of urban suburbs or unimportant provinces in larger countries. International organisations may also be a source of expertise for economic and social development; and small states which group together in regional bodies may thereby achieve economies of scale.

However, international linkages may impose a considerable administrative burden, which is likely to be felt as much in the Ministry of Education as in other organisations. Officers have to attend international meetings, present country papers, and respond to questionnaires. Ministries also have to host external visitors, negotiate aid packages, investigate opportunities for specialist training overseas, and secure accreditation through either local or external examinations. These are among the matters discussed in this chapter.

1. Small States and International Organisations

It is useful to commence with organisations in which, at least in theory, the status of small states is equal to that of medium-sized and large states. Most prominent among these organisations are the United Nations (UN) and its specialist bodies. In absolute (even if not in

proportional) terms, small states contribute little money to these organisations; but the votes of all states are officially accorded equal weight.

In the education sector, the most important UN bodies are:

- the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation (Unesco),
- the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef),
- the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and
- the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), more commonly known as the World Bank.

Also, of course, many small states are members of the Commonwealth.

The benefits of membership of international organisations were highlighted in several of the case studies contributing to this book. The Lucia study indicated that the country "has taken its Unesco membership very seriously, and has both contributed to and benefitted from a number of Unesco projects". Many countries also operate projects with Unicef, UNDP and World Bank funds.

Yet some small states have refused to join UN bodies, partly because they feel that they cannot afford the manpower and/or finance required. For example Tuvalu, Niue and Nauru have refused to join Unesco. One reason has been an unwillingness to devote scarce manpower to the many meetings required for effective participation. Such meetings are necessary both for the overall government of the organisations and for development of specific programmes and projects. Also, the Montserrat case study indicated that although the territory has participated in Unesco's Major Project in Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, involvement has been limited, "partly because of lack of finance to attend meetings".

Unesco policy requires member states to establish national commissions which are primarily responsible for the promotion of the ideals of the organisation at country level, but which also undertake liaison and project development functions. However, in small states these commissions may be difficult to support. St. Lucia joined Unesco in 1980, and in its enthusiasm established a national commission with five posts. These were the Secretary General, a secretary, a documentalist/librarian, an audio-visual aids technician and an executive officer. This staffing proved a heavy burden, and created imbalances within the ministry. Within a few years most posts had to be abandoned, and in 1990 only the first two remained occupied.

The Demands of International Organisations: A View from Maldives

The demands of international organisations may, often unwittingly, create a heavy burden for small states. This was graphically expressed in the Maldives case study, which described the demands as "debilitating and sometimes overwhelming". The case study continued by observing that:

> *Some of the most efficient manpower is engaged most of the time in providing information for donor agencies. Often routine functions are pushed aside due to the pressure of urgent external demands. The sudden onslaught of the World Conference on Education for All in 1990 is a case in point. Preparations had to be made at the expense of routine but important functions. Unfortunately, most of the large international development organisations are not adequately sensitive to small states' special needs in educational organisation and management.*

2. Small States and Regional Organisations

In addition to the global international bodies, many small states are members of regional bodies. Broadly-focused regional organisations include:

- the Asian Development Bank (ADB),
- the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN),
- the Caribbean Community (CARICOM),
- the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB),
- the Organisation of American States (OAS)
- the Organisation of African Unity (OAU),
- the Organisation of East Caribbean States (OECS),
- the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), and
- the South Pacific Commission (SPC).

This, of course, is only a short list to which many bodies could be added.

A similar comment applies to the regional bodies concerned specifically with education. They include:

- the Caribbean Network of Educational Innovation for Development (CARNEID),
- the Caribbean Regional Council for Adult Education (CARCAE),
- the Consortium on Pacific Education (COPE),
- the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC),
- the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO),
- the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA), and
- the West African Examinations Council (WAEC).

Such organisations are of considerable importance in educational development. As noted by the Barbados study:

> These regional bodies provide a forum for discussion by education personnel across the region, thus assisting cross-fertilisation of ideas. The bodies also provide direct or indirect training in key areas, and help develop a regional identity.

However, the Barbados study added a viewpoint which would be widely echoed:

> Because proposals have to be endorsed, often individually, by the ... territories involved, the work of the bodies is often slow.

The example presented concerned the Caribbean Examinations Council. Although the Council was set up in 1972, some member states have still not yet produced the legislation necessary to give it legal status. Also, the CXC has not yet been able to develop syllabuses or examinations in religious education, partly because of the number of religious denominations in the region and their sensitivity in this matter.

Perhaps even more serious than the slow pace of work is a point made in the Guyana case study, namely that the regional organisations "make major demands on the time of Ministry personnel". Regional meetings must be held, projects developed, and documentation prepared. As noted in Chapter 4, the fact that ministry personnel often have to travel abroad for regional meetings may cause considerable disruption at home. The Dominica case study added that:

> the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) requires that a specific officer use 80 per cent of his time for the Technical-Vocational Project. Also, the SEO (Secondary) spends about 80 per cent of his time dealing with the CXC and other external examination bodies.

Nevertheless, most case studies agreed that on balance the work of regional organisations was strongly beneficial. In the words of the Dominica study, the regional bodies:

> can usually perform their functions more effectively than the Ministry could by itself, and they do widen the horizons of officers who work with them.

3. Small States and International Aid

It was noted in Chapter 1 that small states generally receive favourable treatment in international aid. Average per capita aid receipts in small countries are much higher than in large countries. This is partly a function of the visibility of small states in international affairs. It may also reflect recognition that small states have special needs, including in the operation of government bureaucracies.

However, international aid projects may also create a considerable administrative burden. Rarely do aid agencies fully cooperate with each other. They often require governments to provide extensive statistical and other information, but demand this information in different formats and with different degrees of detail. The view expressed in the Guyana case study could be echoed in many other countries:

> The varying reporting and monitoring formats of the aid agencies, particularly in circumstances of an already overstretched managerial team in the Ministry, create a counter-productive treadmill in which education managers are so pre-occupied with meeting reporting requirements that they have little time for actual execution.

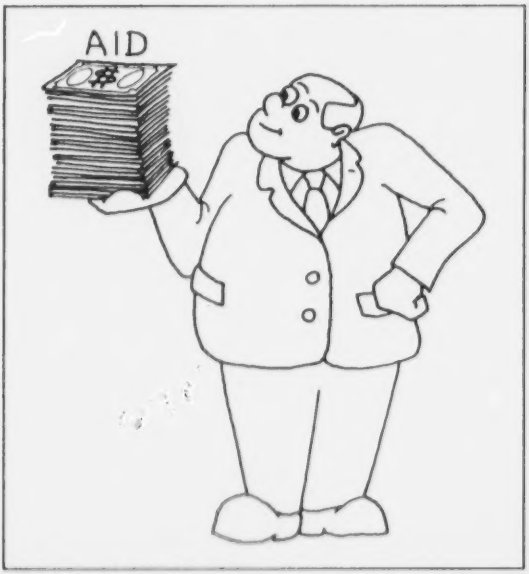
In addition to the demands of reporting, in order to maintain a good flow of resources recipient states have to pay close attention to interpersonal relations. The multiplicity of aid relationships may make this problematic. The potential extent of such a task is indicated by Table 7, which shows the number and range of education projects in The Gambia in 1987. The table shows 34 projects funded by seven bilateral and six multilateral agencies.

Table 7: Aid Projects in the Education Sector, The Gambia, 1987

Nature of Project	Source of Funds	Expenditure (US$)
Book production equipment	United Kingdom	16,000
Gambia College salaries/equipment	United Kingdom	124,000
Curriculum advisers	United Kingdom	140,000
Gambia Technical Training Institute	United Kingdom	20,000
Technical School salaries	United Kingdom	20,000
Scholarships	United Kingdom	1,000,000
Scholarships (Fulbright)	USA	40,000
Scholarships (Eisenhower Grant)	USA	25,000
Military training	USA	60,000
International Visitors' Program	USA	19,000
Cross-cultural education	USA	1,000
Village education projects	USA	12,000
Peace Corps teachers	USA	106,000
Scholarships	USSR	225,000
Construction projects	Canada	229,000
Gambia Technical Training Institute	Canada	70,000
Gambia College staff development	Canada	167,000
High school teachers	CUSO (Canada)	15,000
Technical training	France	208,000
Teaching and cultural education	France	358,000
Fellowships	Austria	286,000
Adult education	Cebemo (Holland	23,000
Literacy	WEC	8,000
Secondary Science and English	Unesco	2,000
Project evaluation training	Unesco	8,000
Inventory for school furniture	Unesco	3,000
Nonformal education case study	Unesco	n.a.
Veterinary training	FAO	50,000
Staff resources development	Action Aid	25,000
In-service teacher training	Action Aid	99,000
School construction and furnishing	Action Aid	174,000
Workshops and exchange visits	Action Aid	11,000
Primary and nursery schools	Christian Children's Fund	410,000
Variety small projects	Save the Ch'n Fund (USA)	21,000

Some small states, moreover, deal with an even wider range of agencies. Seychelles has bilateral education projects with Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Cuba, Germany, France, India, Japan, Malaysia, Netherlands, Nigeria, North Korea, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the USA and the USSR. Each agency has its own style and expectations, and the large number of links creates considerable work. Complexities are exacerbated by the lack of diplomatic representation on either side. The small states themselves cannot afford to maintain many embassies abroad; and rarely do small states directly host more than a handful of embassies from other countries.

Three further points are also worth highlighting. They concern:



Foreign aid plays an important role in the education systems of many small states. However, it may also have many administrative and management implications.

- *The size of projects*. Some donors and lenders find it uneconomic to prepare small projects, and therefore press small states to accept large ones. The World Bank, for example, is generally unwilling to countenance projects below US$5 million. The result is either that large education projects are devised which severely stretch the country's absorptive capacity, or that education is grouped with other sectors in multi-faceted projects. Multi-faceted grouping of course has the advantage of promoting sectoral linkages. However it extends the administrative burdens on ministries which are already hard pressed.
- *The extent to which aid projects are tailored to individual countries*. As noted in the Kiribati case study, aid agencies are not always willing to examine in detail the specific circumstances of every country. In the worst cases, agency staff whose

principal expertise is in large countries simply recommend the transfer of packages from large countries to small ones. In other cases the agencies devise what they consider to be a small-country prototype, which they then propose with little modification to a wide range of target recipients. Agencies are not always willing to devote the time and resources necessary for adequate tailoring of projects for individual small states. If they send staff for preparation, implementation or evaluation, the visits of those staff are often made to fit in with the requirements of neighbouring large states which the staff also wish to visit. Small states do not always gain the individualised attention that they feel they deserve.

- *The distorting effects of aid.* Even in large countries, external aid may create or exacerbate imbalances in development. In small countries the distorting effects are likely to be particularly serious. Aid projects cause both financial and human resources to concentrate in particular sectors, often at the expense of others. The Guyana case study pointed out that:

> the amount of time spent in implementing foreign projects, as opposed to routine and locally-funded activity, is often not commensurate with their importance.

Also, the Montserrat case study referred to the temptation to take aid simply because it is available. Then projects:

> create new tasks for Ministry officials, and sometimes teachers are taken from their classes. This does sometimes help to keep local educators abreast of new thinking; but in many cases the end value is doubtful. Also, the government does not always have the funds for the new recurrent costs which are required to sustain projects.

However, it is refreshing to find an increasingly critical climate within many small states. This was particularly clear in the Dominica, Barbados, Montserrat, and Solomon Islands case studies. In the words of the Dominica study, it is "necessary for countries to learn to refuse aid that is not in keeping with development plans and goals".

Small States, Large Aid: The Experience of Solomon Islands

During the 1980's, the government of Solomon Islands embarked on two large projects orchestrated and primarily funded through the World Bank. The first project (1982-89) focused on primary schools, and had a budget of US$10 million. The second project (1986-90) focused on secondary schools, and had a budget of US$12 million.

Although in large states these sums might not seem particularly dramatic, they look very different in a small system. In 1981 the government's total education budget was just US$7.2 million. In 1985 it had only risen to US$7.4 million, but by 1989, chiefly as a result of the projects, it grew to US$16.2 million.

Whilst the overall objectives were widely welcomed, some observers were concerned about the dominance of the projects in the system as a whole. Also, implementation encountered considerable problems of absorptive capacity.

Small systems are more vulnerable to distortion, and small states lack personnel capacity to take on large projects at short notice. Pressures from agencies which dislike small projects sometimes lead small states to bite off more than they can easily digest.

4. Coping with Demands

(a) A Special Unit?

Views on the best ways to deal with international organisations vary. One strategy is to create a special unit within the ministry of education, which is then made responsible for all external linkages. The ministry in Seychelles, for example, has a Division of International Cooperation headed by an Assistant Director. This division deals with external correspondence and records, keeps track of requests from foreign organisations, responds to offers of aid within the stipulated times, and coordinates the aid needs of other divisions of the ministry. The division also liaises with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Economic Development. Its staff have developed considerable expertise,

and are familiar not only with the general procedures of the international organisations but also with the specific individuals operating the systems.

Similar bodies may be found in other countries. The ministry in Maldives has an External Relations and Scholarships Division; the ministry in Solomon Islands has an Implementation and Planning Unit which is primarily concerned with World Bank and other externally-funded projects; and the ministry in The Gambia has a Projects Implementation Unit which has a comparable task.

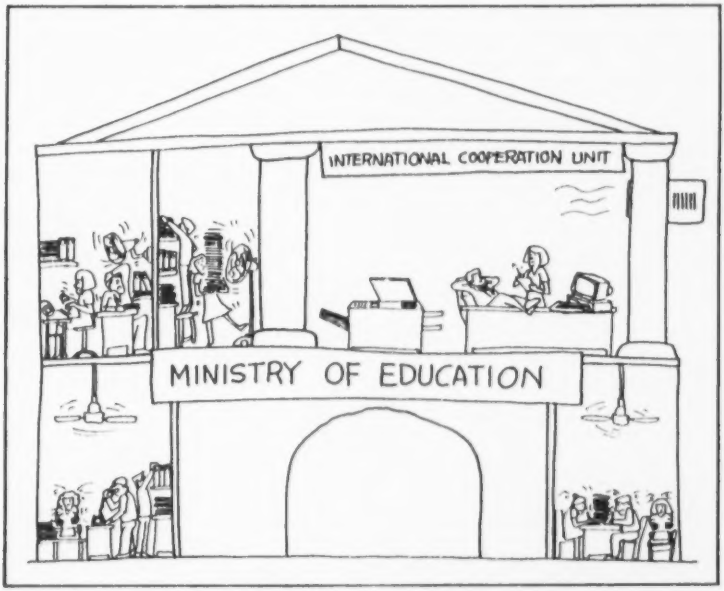
However, other ministries avoid this type of model. As noted above, the authorities in Guyana are very concerned about the potentially distorting effects of aid. In the worst instances, they feel, aid has even created problems that it sought to solve. The distortion of managerial time has caused problems elsewhere in the Ministry, thereby creating a need for more external assistance. The Ministry has therefore refused to operate a special unit to deal with international agencies, and individual staff negotiate with external bodies according to need.

Clearly there is merit in both approaches. The most appropriate model will depend partly on the priority that is attached to external aid, and on the extent to which aid is considered distorting of local priorities. An additional factor of importance in Seychelles is the wide range of external bodies with which the ministry has dealings.

Governments which use the type of model found in Guyana would need to ensure that individuals throughout the ministry are acquainted with the overall policy frameworks. Without this, there would be a danger of individual negotiations with external agencies leading to inconsistencies and contradictions. Authorities would also need to pay attention to individual competencies, remembering that external agencies have access to highly qualified staff and are sometimes aggressive in pushing their own viewpoints. As the Barbados case study noted, projects often bring with them:

> the problems of 'strings' and of the sometimes not-so-well-hidden agendas of the agencies. The agencies' agendas do not always match the official agendas of the countries being offered 'assistance'....
>
> Part of the solution must be for countries to have clearly thought- out plans and programmes before assistance is sought. In turn Ministries need training and development of their own people, and they should insist that at least some consultants are local or regional.

A similar viewpoint was expressed in the Dominica case study.



Senior officials in ministries which have special International Cooperation Units should be conscious of the danger of internal inequalities in the distribution of resources. Such imbalances may lead to resentment within the ministry and to distortion of priorities.

(b) Other Strategies

Five further strategies for coping with the demands of international linkages are worth highlighting. They are to:

1. *Educate the international agencies*. Much of the problem lies with the international agencies themselves. Small states should point out that it is unreasonable for the agencies to expect staff to prepare so many statistics and country papers, or to read so many indigestible documents. As noted by the Barbados case study, the agencies should

also be requested to improve coordination among themselves.

Within some organisations, it must be recognised, there have been improvements. For example in 1984 Unesco established a sub-regional office in Western Samoa. Tonga, Fiji and Western Samoa were already Unesco members in 1984, and the activities of the office encouraged Cook Islands, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to join the organisation.

In general, however, much greater sensitivity is required. Agencies should be willing to devise projects which are tailored to the needs of smaller states, and should not expect Ministry of Education staff to prepare the same amount of initial, interim and project-completion documentation that would be required in larger states.

2. *Develop expertise in negotiation*. All states need expertise in dealing with international organisations. They need staff with knowledge of the procedures, jargon and hidden agendas of such organisations, with ability to draft documents and to challenge the viewpoints of external agents, and with good interpersonal skills for dealing with people of many nationalities.

   Small states are again handicapped because they have small populations and therefore small pools from which to recruit staff. One way round shortages of suitable nationals is to employ expatriates. Indeed sometimes the international agencies themselves are willing to help recruit and pay such staff. Employment of talented personnel is as much in the interests of the international agencies as in those of the small states, because it greatly facilitates design and implementation of effective projects.

3. *Establish appropriate internal procedures*. In this connection, two strategies used in the Ministry of Education in St. Lucia to control the demands that international organisations make on the time of senior personnel are particularly worth noting:

   - Heads of Department (i.e. the Principal Assistant Secretary, the Director of Culture, the Secretary General of the Unesco National Commission, and the Director of Library Services) are encouraged to represent the Ministry by themselves. The Permanent Secretary meets overseas personnel only when necessary.
   - The Ministry has an interdepartmental committee which facilitates the planning of major conferences and seminars requested by overseas organisations. In this way, such requests are met as routinely as possible.

4. *Contract work to others*. As an alternative to trying to do everything themselves, some small states contract work out. For example the

Barbados government has contracted the British Council to administer the Human Resources Development component of a major education and training project. Through such an arrangement the Ministry secures professional expertise. Perhaps even more important, it secures time. Some officers in the Ministry do have the necessary expertise, but they are too busy with other matters.

5. *Use the Unesco National Commission.* It was noted above that Unesco requires all its member states to operate national commissions. It is perhaps fortunate that not all international organisations have the same requirement. But, given that it is a Unesco requirement, small states could consider making their Unesco national commissions the focus for all international relationships.

Small States and Information Flows

The Guyana case study noted that as the country has become more involved with international agencies, external requests for information have increased correspondingly. On rough analysis, about nine person-months are spent year responding to requests from external agencies.

On the other hand, external agencies are also providers of information. In most small states, much more information flows in than flows out.

Yet the inward flow of information may create another problem, for officers may lack the time and skills to digest everything. In Jersey this is said to create a sense of guilt and inadequacy. The case study observed "an anxiety that somehow a vital piece of research, or a report with considerable implications for local schools or teachers, has been missed and that the system has suffered."

Technology may hold part of the key to these problems, allowing data to be stored and retrieved in varying formats as necessary. Technology also facilitates cataloguing and indexing of incoming publications.

What else can small ministries do to ensure effective management of information demands?

5. Sharing Expertise

At several points this book has stressed the desirability of sharing expertise. In most contexts, the question is how small states can gain access to external expertise, either by recruiting overseas consultants or by participating in regional organisations whose staff serve several countries.

The corollary of this is that small states should be generous with their own officers. When small states have experts in particular tasks, they should be prepared to share those experts with other states. Such sharing may bring several advantages:

a) it makes available to other countries the expertise of individuals who are already familiar with the circumstances of small states;
b) it promotes regional cooperation and reciprocal sharing of expertise; and
c) it provides professional stimulus for the experts, generating comparative perspectives which may be useful in the domestic context as well as the external one.

In some states civil service regulations are inflexible, requiring individuals to undertake external consultancy work only in periods of recreation leave. Such systems do not promote sharing of expertise. Much more flexible regulations are needed so that professionals can take leave for consultancy work. Such leave might be unpaid (on the assumption that the other state will pay necessary costs). Alternatively, individuals could be seconded on full pay but required to pay a proportion of their consultancy fees into a general pool for staff development or other purposes.

Another way to share expertise is to welcome officers from other small states on professional exchanges. The importance of this sort of arrangement was stressed in the Montserrat case study, which highlighted the value of "short attachments to an education department in the region with a more stable corps of education officers". Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad were specifically mentioned; but there is little reason why such attachments should not be arranged on a much wider scale, between regions as well as within them.

6. Summary

This chapter began by noting that international linkages are generally much more prominent in small states than in large ones. This is partly

Cooperation between Small States: The Jersey Pattern

The Jersey government recognises the desirability of sharing expertise and experiences with other small states. The most structured form of cooperation is with Guernsey, which is geographically close. However, the education authorities also have links with the Isle of Man, which has a similar relationship to the United Kingdom. These connections are especially important when there is a threat to the Islands' autonomy.

Jersey also operates a small foreign aid programme. Recognising the value of links with countries in comparable circumstances, much of the aid has been channelled to other small states. The aid programme has included projects in Seychelles and Montserrat.

How much sharing of expertise is there in the small states with which you are familiar? How can it be expanded?

a result of economic structures, but also reflects the extent to which small states find it useful to join international and regional organisations. International linkages also arise from aid flows, which for political and other reasons tend to be proportionately greater in small than in larger countries.

The first three sections enlarged on this, first by highlighting small states' linkages with international and regional organisations, and then by noting some specific aspects of international aid. While the linkages were recognised to be on balance beneficial, the chapter noted that they can create a heavy administrative burden.

One way to deal with this problem is to establish a special unit within the ministry. This approach has been favoured in Seychelles, Maldives, Solomon Islands and The Gambia. However other countries, such as Guyana, have opposed this type of model. The relative advantages and disadvantages were discussed in the first part of Section 4.

The second part of Section 4 turned to other strategies for dealing with administrative burdens. It focused particularly on educating the international agencies, developing the necessary expertise in negotiation, establishing appropriate internal procedures, contracting work to others, and making use of Unesco national commissions.

Finally, the chapter discussed sharing of expertise. Too many small

states are concerned only to acquire expertise from outside, and are unenthusiastic about sharing their own expertise. Major benefits may accrue from sharing, not only for the recipient countries but also for the originating countries. The section pointed out the need for more flexible civil service regulations to permit greater sharing among small states.

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Chapter 7:

Conclusions: Experiences and Models

This book commenced with the observation that many of the bureaucratic models used in small states were originally designed for much larger states. Although these models have functioned in small states for some time, they have not always operated well. In many situations basic models should be modified to fit the circumstances of small states. The book has also highlighted management procedures which may be particularly useful in small ministries and highly personalised societies.

Of course many organisational and management procedures are common to both small and large ministries. These common features have not been examined in this book. Discussion on these topics is readily available in the standard literature, of which some key works have noted in the Further Reading sections of the relevant chapters.

This final chapter pulls together the threads of preceding discussion. It begins with some comments on diversity and commonality among small states before moving to the need for stronger adaptation of models for public administration. The chapter then summarises discussion on grouping of functions, setting of priorities, and management issues. The concluding section notes some implications for research and training.

1. Diversity and Commonality

Among the first matters addressed during preparation of the Commonwealth project was the definition of 'small'. As noted in the Introduction, the project adopted population as its main criterion, setting an upper limit of 1.5 million. However, it is recognised that this cut-off point is entirely arbitrary, and that it is often more appropriate to think of a continuum of size and its associated implications. It is also recognised that states with small populations display enormous geographic, cultural, political and economic diversity.

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Yet small states also have much in common. In the field of public administration this partly results from:

- the spread of Western bureaucratic models during the colonial era, and
- global economic and political linkages, both historical and contemporary.

Although most former colonies have now attained political independence, they retain the basic models which they inherited from the past. Moreover even countries which were not colonies have adopted bureaucratic models based on the Western prototype.

Global models also exist within education systems. School systems throughout the world are divided into separate stages labelled primary, secondary and tertiary. Within each stage, pupils are divided into grades through which pupils pass in sequence one year at a time. Within the schools pupils are grouped into classes and attend lessons taught by one teacher at a time, generally using a combination of textbooks, exercise books and blackboard work. Teachers are also appointed and supervised on comparable patterns. They undergo comparable forms of training, are periodically evaluated by inspectors, and require similar types of bureaucracy for promotion, transfer, payment of salaries, and so on.

One implication concerning ministries of education arises from the linkages between objectives and structures. Chapter 3 did note some variations according to the priorities of individual governments. For example not all governments stress kindergartens or adult education, and some authorities are more anxious than others to have school broadcasts, nutrition programmes and textbook-production units. In general, however, the similarities among ministries of education are much greater than the differences. This is chiefly because they share similar objectives and needs.

Another implication of the commonalities is that although this book has concentrated on Commonwealth countries which share a common British colonial heritage, many points are also relevant to other countries. Differences certainly exist for example between British and French colonial legacies and administrative styles. French administrators placed more emphasis on staff training and qualifications, for instance, and on standardisation between territories. But the similarities between the objectives and methods of administration were much greater than the differences. Many points in this book certainly require modification to fit specific countries, but the book probably has relevance to French-speaking and to other small states as well as to English-speaking ones.

Finally, although this book has focused on Ministries of Education, many of its findings are applicable to other ministries. However, in most countries Education is among the larger ministries. This implies that the impact of smallness may be felt even more strongly in some other ministries.

2. The Need for Stronger Adaptation

The Commonwealth project showed some ways in which the bureaucracies of small states have been adapted to fit the advantages and limitations of small size. However, it also showed that most countries need much clearer thinking about the implications of their bureaucratic structures, and about the alternatives. Although the last decade has brought a general growth of interest in the ways that bureaucratic structures inherited from large states should be modified to fit small states, the case studies showed that many Ministries of Education are restructured in an *ad hoc* way. For example, the Maldives case study indicated that:

> Although it might seem obvious, it has sometimes been forgotten that serious consideration has to be given to manpower constraints before any new function is undertaken by the Ministry. Experience shows that when new functions are incorporated hastily, manpower is difficult to obtain and existing human resources have to be spread more thinly.

The Dominica case study made a slightly different, but related point:

> Tasks may be allocated simply to people who are capable of undertaking them, with the result that jobs are gradually established that expect the postholders to perform unrelated duties. Likewise, new staff may be appointed to posts that require performance of very eclectic tasks.... The multi-faceted nature of such duties can lead to difficulties. Most serious are the problems of inefficiency and ineffectiveness which arise from overwork.

And the Jersey case study described the Department of Education as resembling:

> a hatstand on which various pressure groups and interests have lodged a variety of headgear!

These types of comment could be echoed in many other contexts. They apply both to countries covered by the Commonwealth project and to other countries. Some of the case studies showed clear and imaginative ways in which structures had been adapted or reshaped to meet small-state circumstances; but others showed structures which are unwieldy, inefficient and wasteful of scarce manpower resources.

3. Grouping of Functions

The question is then how *should* small ministries be organised. And, leading on from this, what guidelines can be presented on what functions should be grouped in order to maximise efficiency and effectiveness. It is impossible to lay out firm rules which should be followed all over the world. Decision-makers in individual states must take into account their own specific circumstances, including the macro- and micro- political frameworks, and the availability of individuals with specific combinations of expertise. However, one may at least highlight some models which embody instructive experiences and insights.

(a) Macro-Level Grouping

Chapter 3 noted a strong tendency for small states to group several functions in one ministry. It is not suggested that this does not also happen in larger states; but it does seem more common in small states, and especially among the smallest of the small. Grouping of functions permits ministries to be larger than they would otherwise be, and thereby to gain economies of scale. For example the Ministry of Education in Malta employs a pool of administrative personnel to serve not just the Department of Education but also the Departments of Culture & Environment, Museums and Libraries. The common pool services needs in transport, maintenance and minor staff.

The type of functional grouping in Malta, with education, culture, environment, museums and libraries in a single ministry, is not uncommon. It is a logical grouping, for the functions are all related. Other functions widely grouped with education are sports, youth, and community affairs.

Some ministries also group less closely-related functions. This is particularly the case in the smallest of the small countries. Table 3 showed seven ministries in which education was grouped with health, and one in which it was grouped with postal services. In addition, although it is not apparent in the title, the Ministry of Education &

Culture in Barbados is also responsible for ecclesiastical affairs.

In these instances it might be argued that there remains a strong case for multi-functional grouping, for such ministries can still share personnel at all levels. At the top they can share ministers and permanent secretaries, and at the bottom they can share drivers and handymen. Such arrangements improve utilisation of the scarce human resources of small states.

However, some multi-functional ministries fail to make full use of the potential advantages of this form of organisation. Chapter 2 presented example of Montserrat, in which the component parts of the Ministry of Education, Health & Community Services have largely operated independently of each other. They have not shared resources as effectively as they might, and linkages within the ministry have been little stronger than those between ministries. Similar observations might be made in other countries. They arise in part because traditions have been inherited from larger ministries where closer integration is less easy. A conscious effort is sometimes needed to overcome these traditions.

(b) Micro-Level Grouping

In small states, the specifics of micro-state grouping often depend on who is actually available with particular skills and interests. It is obviously desirable as far as possible to group tasks which are related, but sometimes it is necessary to group unrelated tasks. The quotation above from Dominica stressed that unrelated grouping can lead to problems. However, the difficulties are not always insuperable.

Many examples of multi-functional grouping were given in the case studies, and some have already been cited in previous chapters. Examples include:

- in St. Lucia a single officer has to take charge of both statistics and examinations;
- in Jersey an Assistant Director has to take responsibility for both libraries and sports & recreation;
- in Maldives the Under Secretary in charge of administration of schools also engages in policy research, and interviews candidates for teaching posts;
- in Montserrat head teachers are also responsible for curriculum formulation and in-service training;
- in Malta Education Officers are responsible for curriculum development, teaching methods, selection of textbooks, extra-

curricular activities, the use of apparatus, and the utilisation of facilities;

- in Solomon Islands the Chief Education Officers in the divisions of both primary and secondary education are required also to be planners, project officers, recruiting officers, and supplies officers; and

In small states, officers often have to be multi-functional, taking on a wide variety of activities.

- in Guyana Education Officers are responsible for the curriculum process, physical facilities and equipment, school welfare, absenteeism, co-curricular activities, and school-community relations.

Senior administrators need to ensure that their multi-functional officers have some sort of training and support. They must also pay attention to supervision, without which there is a danger, in the words of the Solomon Islands case study, that multi-functionalism:

> allows a lot to be ignored, especially in areas in which officers lack expertise. The officers tend to perform best in their professional areas and simply try to make do in others.

Moreover, there may be the additional danger that:

> Sometimes officers are so preoccupied with meetings relating to their many tasks that in the end they have little time to implement anything.

Finally, it is worth repeating a point from Chapter 3 that although many ministries divide their staffs into professional and administrative wings, in small states this may be less appropriate than in large ones. Such division risks excessive compartmentalisation, which in turn may restrict opportunities for combining jobs to make reasonable workloads, and therefore may obstruct efficient use of talents.

4. Setting Priorities

It is essential for ministries to set priorities. Chapter 3 suggested that the basic questions for senior administrators and policy-makers concern:

- which tasks will be undertaken by the Ministry of Education;
- which tasks will be undertaken by other ministries and government agencies;
- which tasks will be delegated to non-government agencies; and
- which tasks will not be undertaken at all.

Examples from each category have already been presented, and do not need repetition. The main point is that senior administrators should identify what they will not undertake, as well as what they will undertake. The answers will vary from state to state. For instance the

Gambian case study shows that the Ministry undertakes many tasks that are not attempted in the smaller countries; but officials in The Gambia have also recognised the value of contracting curriculum development to teachers and others, rather than trying to do everything in the Ministry itself. The result of such initiatives is often much more efficient operation, and a much better product.

5. Management Issues

Management issues were a particular focus of Chapter 4. Perhaps the most obvious and most important matter is the extent to which management procedures must take account of the highly strongly personalised environments of small states. Although it might be assumed that small states can operate with greater informality, in practice many administrators in small states prefer to stick closely to official rules and regulations. They do this in order to protect themselves and others in an environment which is strongly susceptible to accusations of favouritism.

The chapter also noted the importance of formal channels for dissemination of information. The case studies presented several examples in which senior administrators simply assumed that information had been disseminated when in fact it had not. Small states may not be able to spare manpower for the sorts of sophisticated newsletters or other information channels found in many large states; but administrators can still ensure that circulars are distributed and that meetings are held.

Chapter 4 also discussed ways to manage staff absence. It highlighted the importance of ensuring that:

- even if one individual is primarily responsible for a specific task, at least one other individual is aware of basic procedures, and can take over if necessary;
- officers are required to prepare clear instructions for work which they expect to arise while they are away;
- more than one individual has authority to sign financial and other documents;
- records are orderly, complete and accessible; and
- individuals are discouraged from interpreting their duty statements too narrowly.

A subsequent section of Chapter 4 pointed out that difficulties of staff absence may also be alleviated through development of teams.

Management issues were also discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 focused on personnel matters, and included discussion of job definition, sources of personnel, career paths, staff appraisal and training. Chapter 6 focused on international linkages, highlighting the need for both structures and management procedures for liaison with external agencies. One specific aspect concerned management of external requests for information; and another concerned management of incoming publications.

6. Implications for Research and Training

Finally, it is clear that more research is needed into the special needs of small states and into ways to meet those needs. Ideally, such research will be linked with training in order to strengthen its impact on actual practice. Small states have many positive features not found in large states; but the full benefit of these advantages is not always realised.

Some points about training for small states were raised in Chapter 5. The chapter noted five main strategies through which small states may acquire training, and highlighted associated management issues. The chapter mentioned universities and other institutions of higher education in small states. Of course, these institutions may also be focal points for research.

At the same time, it must be recognised that in some ways small states are handicapped in research. Very few small states have good research libraries, for even if the governments are rich enough buy the books, they can rarely find the specialised personnel to manage and use such libraries. While material on individual small states is of course best found in those small states, extensive comparative material can only be found in large states.

Two partial exceptions to these points are embodied in the Universities of the West Indies (UWI) and the South Pacific (USP). Yet even in these institutions the amount of research which examines small states as small states (as opposed to states which merely happen to be small) has so far been disappointing. The bulk of the literature on small-state issues has not come from these universities but instead from such organisations as the Commonwealth Secretariat and Unesco, and from universities in such countries as the USA, and the United Kingdom. This observation should not be taken to imply that the staff of UWI and USP have not been doing their jobs, for they have certainly done a great deal of other research and teaching. However, the lack of research on the special features of small states remains disappointing.

The Commonwealth project which led to production of this book might be considered a valuable step forward. The case studies which formed the basis for this book were themselves important research exercises which the authors as well as the readers found very illuminating. Also the project is helping to strengthen training capacity, particularly in UWI and USP but also at the University of Malta and at a number of other institutions. Expertise is also made available through the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC).

Nevertheless, there remains a need for much greater sharing of expertise among small states. While individual small states may feel limitations in human resources, as a group their expertise is both deep and wide. As noted in Chapter 6, it would be desirable in many small states for civil service regulations to be relaxed to allow staff to undertake consultancy work in other small (and perhaps also large) states. As well as benefitting the recipient countries, such arrangements would benefit the sending countries because the consultants would broaden their own perspectives and gain professional stimulus. Similar points apply to the staff of universities and colleges in small states.

On a final positive note, there is considerable evidence of openness to ideas and willingness to change. The organisers of the Commonwealth project were considerably encouraged by one case-study author, who wrote that:

> Many of the questions asked and issues raised led me to seek out and discover new and interesting information. I also drew heavily on my 15 years' experience continuously in the Ministry. Writing the study has whetted my appetite for further work in this area.

It is hoped that others will also feel inspired to respond to the challenge.

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Appendix

Much of the material for this book was derived from a set of 14 case studies commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat. An edited set of these case studies is available separately from the Commonwealth Secretariat. It is entitled *Ministries of Education in Small States: Case Studies of Organisation and Management* (edited by Mark Bray, 1991). The countries covered by the case studies, and their authors, were:

- Barbados (Ralph Boyce),
- Botswana (Jakes Swartland),
- Brunei Darussalam (Lim Jock Jin & C.J. Nuttman),
- Dominica (Merle E. Peters & Herbert F. Sabaroche),
- Gambia (Gibou Njie & Sulayman Fye),
- Guyana (Una Paul, Milton Bernard, Reuben Dash & Evelyn Hamilton),
- Jersey (John Rodhouse),
- Kiribati (Meita Beiabure Bakeea),
- Maldives (Mohammed Waheed Hassan),
- Malta (Charles J. Farrugia & Paul A. Attard),
- Montserrat (Howard A. Fergus & Albert L. Thomas),
- St. Lucia (Nicholas Frederick),
- Seychelles (Patrick Pillay & Atputhanathan Murugiah), and
- Solomon Islands (Walter Ramo).

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These are among the questions addressed in this book. It is the product of a pan-Commonwealth project in which officers from small ministries contributed practical insights. Experiences have been distilled and analysed, and are presented in a lively and readable format for both administrators and trainers.

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